

200 441

PR 1

ОТ СОСТАВИТЕЛЯ

В декабре 1936 года в Испании в бою под Кордовой погиб Джон Корнфорд, боец английской секции Интернациональной бригады. Корнфорд был поэтом-публицистом, одним из руководителей коммунистического движения среди английского студенчества. За день до гибели ему исполнился 21 год. Всю свою сознательную жизнь, короткую и яркую, он отдал борьбе за коммунизм, и о нем боевой соратник, старый ветеран, мог сказать: «Это был храбрый солдат».

Корнфорд родился в 1915 году в семье профессора Кембриджского университета. Одаренный юноша с ранних лет увлекается историей, политикой, литературой. Пытливый по натуре, он сам стремится доискаться истины, не принимая на веру те взгляды, которые были привычными в его семье. Следя за развитием политической борьбы в стране, Корнфорд начинает сомневаться в справедливости буржуазного мира. Ответа на волнующие его вопросы он ищет в марксистской философии. В 16 лет он штудирует «Капитал» Маркса и сочинения Ленина. Его письма, написанные в школе, а затем в колледже, обнаруживают редкую разносторонность и зрелость в суждениях и оценках. Он размышляет над пьесами Чехова, восхищается музыкой Сибелиуса, обсуждает положение в стране и разбирает новую экономическую программу лейбористов. С 1932 года он член коммунистической партии. Спустя год Корнфорд впервые выступает на митинге перед рабочей аудиторией.

В 1934 году Корнфорд поступает в Кембриджский университет. Здесь в полной мере раскрываются его незаурядные спо-

собности. Он блестяще учится, переходя с курса на курс с похвальными отзывами, успевая отдавать массу времени и энергии политической работе.

Перед Корнфордом, одним из лучших студентов Кембриджа, открывались широкие перспективы научной работы. Но когда в июле 1936 года вспыхнул мятеж Франко в Испании, он оставил университет и стал солдатом Интернациональной бригады, чтобы фашисты «не прошли».

В своей книге «Доброволец в Испании» английский писатель Sommerfield нарисовал обаятельный облик Корнфорда в последние месяцы его жизни. Он был неутомим, равнодушен к опасностям, умел заразительно смеяться, ободряя друзей, и даже на передовой не расставался с томиком Маркса и трагедиями Шекспира.

Наследие Корнфорда невелико — антивоенный памфлет «Британская армия и мир», полтора десятка статей в различных периодических изданиях Англии и Америки, стихотворения, письма, дневник. Деятельность Корнфорда-публициста начинается в период его учебы в университете. Его ранняя статья «Заметки об изучении истории в Кембридже» интересна как яркая характеристика постановки преподавания истории в одном из крупнейших университетов Великобритании. Корнфорд стремится разобраться в сложных идеологических вопросах с позиций марксистской философии, показать, как мнимая беспартийность буржуазной историографии является замаскированной формой защиты капиталистического строя. Чтобы добиться поставленной цели, буржуазные историки преднамеренно искажают факты, превращают историю в «комнатную науку», полностью отрывая ее от практической деятельности людей и таких смежных областей науки, как философия, политическая экономия, литература и ряд других. «Свободное» преподавание в университете на деле приводит к подчинению студенчества влиянию буржуазных идей.

Несмотря на глубокое в целом освещение поставленной проблемы некоторые положения статьи недостаточно аргументированы; внешний академизм нашел свое выражение в манере изложения: язык статьи тяжел и сложен. Такого рода недочеты вполне объясняются молодостью Джона Корнфорда, недостатком жизненного опыта.

Развитие международных событий заставляет Корнфорда выступить со статьей «Борьба за власть в Западной Европе», по-

священной расстановке классовых сил и партий в ряде стран Европы, причинам появления фашизма и прихода национал-социалистов к власти в Германии, изложению позиций партий Коминтерна и Второго Интернационала.

Краткий, но четкий марксистский анализ базиса капиталистического общества позволяет Джону Корнфорду показать истинные экономические и политические причины, обусловившие появление фашизма. Автор статьи подчеркивает его антисоциалистическую сущность. «Неслучайно, — пишет он, — что Гитлер не выполнил ни единого пункта «социалистической части программы», куда входили национализация трестов, банков и больших универсальных магазинов. Эту сторону дела необходимо особенно подчеркнуть, ибо она показывает, что в фашизме нет ничего революционного. Формы управления государством могут быть различными, но его классовая сущность остается неизменной». Такого рода разъяснение было очень своевременным, так как в то время еще были люди, заблуждавшиеся относительно классовой сущности фашизма.

Корнфорд резко разграничивает две реакции на фашизм, одну — со стороны партий реформистского Второго Интернационала, другую — со стороны Коммунистического Интернационала. В тот момент, когда единство действий рабочего класса было делом жизненной важности, лидеры социалистических партий по-прежнему проводили политику отмежевания от коммунистических партий, политику социальных реформ и парламентарного перехода от капитализма к социализму. Единственной политической силой, реально оценившей создавшееся положение, были коммунистические партии, выработавшие новые методы борьбы в соответствии с требованиями момента. Коммунисты вели широкую пропаганду единства действий всех антифашистских сил, разъясняли сущность фашизма и предательскую политику социал-демократов.

Многие страницы этой статьи, написанной более 20 лет назад, звучат актуально и сегодня.

Накаленная атмосфера середины 30-х годов оказывала влияние на все сферы деятельности человека. Не осталась в стороне и литература. В это время перед литераторами Великобритании со всей остротой встал вопрос: «С кем вы, мастера культуры?». Джон Корнфорд, критик и поэт, не мог молчать, не мог пройти мимо ряда сложных процессов, происходивших в английской ли-

тературе. Его ответ на вопрос о том, может ли писатель оставаться сторонним наблюдателем происходящего, мы находим в статье «Левые?». Эту статью следует рассматривать как очень существенный этап в развитии мировоззрения молодого критика. В предыдущие годы Джон Корнфорд в своих письмах неоднократно восхищался поэзией модернистских поэтов (Т. С. Элиот, У. Х. Оден, С. Спендер и др.), его привлекали формальные стороны их творчества, красота и благозвучие стиха. Изучение марксистской философии, политической экономии и личный опыт Корнфорда как коммуниста позволили ему более зрело, с классовых позиций, взглянуть на развитие литературы Англии того периода. Он понял сущность принципа «надпартийности» писателя и его «независимости» от общественной борьбы. «Традиционная надпартийность художника на деле оказывается отказом от классовой борьбы», подчеркивает критик. Резко polemизируя с поэтом Стивеном Спендером, отрицавшим партийность художника, Джон Корнфорд показывает принципиальное отличие «надпартийности» буржуазного писателя от объективности революционного. Стоять в стороне от политики — значит безмолвно содействовать сохранению существующих порядков в капиталистическом мире. А это как раз то, что нужно буржуазии. Писатель-революционер не может укрываться от событий, происходящих в обществе. Он должен быть активным участником революционных битв. Он должен резко выступать против стремления противопоставить искусство жизни. Так понимал Корнфорд задачи настоящего художника.

Одновременно он предостерегал от обольщения революционной ряды писателей, заявивших о своем переходе в лагерь революции. В отношении таких писателей, как Оден и Спендер, предостережение Корнфорда оказалось пророческим. Их революционность была не больше, чем фраза, и после второй мировой войны они изменили делу демократии.

Публицист и литературный критик, Джон Корнфорд вместе с тем много времени и энергии уделял практической деятельности среди студенчества Кембриджского университета. Он был одним из руководителей коммунистического движения среди студентов и много сделал, чтобы сломить устоявшуюся традицию их кастовой замкнутости. Свои мысли о развитии и перспективах этого движения Корнфорд изложил в статье «Коммунизм в университетах». «Коммунизм в университетах, — пишет он, — становится

силой не как результат юношеского романтического идеализма (хотя порой и это обстоятельство играет некоторую роль), но прежде всего потому, что сами условия студенческой жизни ставят такие сложные проблемы, удовлетворительное решение которых могут дать только революционеры». Несмотря на трудности и ошибки, несмотря на предрассудки многих англичан, указывается в статье, сила коммунистических идей неодолима, как неодолимо и само революционное движение.

Свою последнюю большую статью «Положение в Каталонии» Корнфорд пишет уже в Испании. В ней дается обстоятельный анализ расстановки классовых сил в Каталонии. Особенно интересен раздел статьи, озаглавленный «Роль Британии». Корнфорд был в числе первых, кто поднял голос протеста против пресловутого «нейтралитета», провозглашенного правящими кругами Англии. Живой очевидец происходящего, Корнфорд понимал, какой дорогой ценой расплачивается испанский народ за такого рода «нейтралитет».

Значительный интерес представляет также и поэтическое наследие Корнфорда. Трудно судить, как сложилась бы в дальнейшем его творческая судьба, но то, что дошло до нас, говорит о больших способностях молодого поэта. Стихи Корнфорд пишет с раннего детства; в годы пребывания в колледже он увлекается Шелли и Китсом, из современной же поэзии — Т. С. Элиотом, одним из «мэтров» модернизма на Западе. В своих первых, во многом незрелых, стихах юноша Корнфорд подражает господствующей в Англии поэзии с ее белым стихом и сложной ассоциативной системой образов.

В Кембридже Корнфорд отказывается от свободного стиха и обращается к классическим размерам, образы получают более конкретное выражение.

В поэзию Корнфорда все настойчивей входит социальная тема. В стихотворении «Если весна оживит память и раны начнут болеть» уже четко противопоставлены два мира: трудящиеся, борющиеся за хлеб и работу, решившие покончить со старым образом жизни, и те, кто олицетворяет силы старого в жизни — капиталисты и их слуги. Ритм стихотворения удачно передает поступь рабочих колонн, проходящих по улицам университетского городка:

Now the crazy structure of the old world's reeling,
They can see with their own eyes its pitprops falling,

Whether they like it, or whether they don't.
Though they lie to themselves so as not to discover
That their game is up, that their day is over.
They can't be deaf to our shout, "Red Front!"

В декабре 1934 года Корнфорд пишет стихотворение памяти С. М. Кирова. Впервые он рисует образ революционера, всю жизнь посвятившего борьбе за дело угнетенных.

Стихи Корнфорда, написанные в Испании, свидетельствуют о том, как быстро развивался молодой поэт. Когда-то юноша Корнфорд видел заслугу поэтов-модернистов в том, что они пишут в изысканной необычной манере. Теперь основной задачей прогрессивного художника он считает действенность и конкретность творчества. Боевое революционное содержание — вот что определяет творческое лицо автора.

На фронте Корнфорд написал небольшую лирическую поэму «Луна над Тьерзой». Она состоит из 4-х частей, в которых философские раздумья поэта сменяются картинами войны, а лирические отступления — героической патетикой заключительных строф. Эта многоплановость поэмы обусловлена сложностью ее идейного замысла. Она имеет подзаголовок «Перед штурмом Уэски». Накануне атаки, вдали от родины, поэт ощущает себя участником борьбы прогрессивного человечества за лучшее будущее. В первой части поэт размышляет о времени. Он сравнивает прошлое с медленно сползающим ледником, современность подобна стремительному водопаду, будущее неясно, но люди сами стали хозяевами своей судьбы, творцами истории.

Вторая часть переносит нас в обстановку фронта. Там, где все напоминает об опасности и смерти, поэт не чувствует себя одиноким. Решения Конгресса Коминтерна, мужественное поведение на суде Димитрова, боевое напутствие Мориса Тореза вселяют в него веру в победу.

Третья часть живо перекликается с «Арагонским дневником». Корнфорд пишет о трудностях, о том, как обреталось в бою бесстрашие. Опору в трудные для себя часы поэт находил в партии. «Коммунизм был моим пробуждением», — говорил Корнфорд, и эти слова можно поставить эпиграфом ко всему его творчеству. В поэме «Луна над Тьерзой» впервые в английской поэзии той поры Корнфорд так искренне и убежденно передал единство личных и общественных идеалов своего героя.

В последней части возникают картины Европы. Поэт видит Германию под пятой фашизма, Англию, спящую тогда, когда в Испании решаются судьбы человечества. Он обращается к английскому народу со словами:

Here, too, our freedom's swaying in the scales.
O understand before too late
Freedom was never held without a fight.

Поэма завершается горячим призывом к единству рабочего класса, ибо только в интернациональной солидарности трудящихся — залог победы над фашизмом.

Freedom is an easily spoken word
But facts are stubborn things. Here, too, in Spain
Our fight's not won till the workers of all the world
Stand by our guard on Huesca's plain
Swear that our dead fought not in vain,
Raise the red flag triumphantly
For Communism and for liberty.

В пухлых антологиях английской поэзии, составленных буржуазными профессорами, не нашлось места для стихов Корнфорда. Томик его произведений был издан его друзьями из Интернациональной бригады. Но имя Корнфорда не может быть забыто, потому что его жизнь и произведения отразили не только его личную судьбу, а и те пути, которыми шли и идут лучшие представители передовой молодежи, борющейся с войной и реакцией.

Б. Гиленсон



COMMUNISM
was my waking time



CONTENTS

I. ESSAYS	15
NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AT CAMBRIDGE	17
THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN WESTERN EUROPE	24
LEFT?	39
COMMUNISM IN THE UNIVERSITIES	47
THE ROLE OF BRITAIN	57
II. POEMS : 61	
POEMS WRITTEN IN CAMBRIDGE	63
POEMS WRITTEN IN SPAIN	68
III. LETTERS	75
DIARY LETTER FROM ARAGON	91
LETTERS TO MARGOT HEINEMANN	104
IV. REMINISCENCES ABOUT JOHN CORNFORD	111
JOHN CORNFORD IN CAMBRIDGE	113
JOHN CORNFORD IN SPAIN	121
КОММЕНТАРИЙ	131



Essays





NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AT CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY is not even a coherent account of the history of the British bourgeois state and its clashes with other states; it illustrates the confusions and inconsistencies of thought which are a necessary element of capitalist society because the capitalist class cannot even be said to know itself: the true history of capitalist society can only be written by the proletariat.

Cambridge History is class history, but it is confused class history; it is only with the development of Fascism that the exigencies of controlled propaganda in defence of the bourgeoisie during its last struggle to retain power force a coherent and conscious exposition of its ideology as such. Therefore we must look for the beginnings of Fascist history in Cambridge, but we must not forget that the old less militant 'liberal' history is more insidious and perhaps more successful as dope. The British capitalist class may therefore be expected to cling to it more tenaciously, especially as Britain is now one of the 'backward' countries.

In examining the course of study for the Historical Tripos, the first thing we notice is a confusion of aims. This is brought out by studying the relation of historical to other studies, and the division of the field of history into 'subjects' and 'periods' for purposes of

lectures and examinations. This confusion has its advantages because it allows for individual adherence to true (Marxist) history on the part of teachers and students at present, but we may be permitted to ask how long this freedom will be allowed even to those who for examination purposes, in order to prevent the possibility of victimisation, take an opportunist line and slightly 'bourgeoisify' their Marxism.

The confused aims of Cambridge History are of course due to general contradictions in capitalist society outside the academic field, but here we must notice especially two important facts: the lack of an accepted philosophy of history, and the consequent ignorance of what constitutes historical evidence and historical fact.

The prevailing philosophy of history is of course idealism, history being regarded as 'really' the unfolding of 'ideas'; but there are remnants of crude bourgeois materialism, utilitarianism, 'economic interpretation,' and so on. It is noticeable that the Hegelian idealism of the Historical Faculty has no relation at all to the Realism which prevails in the Moral Sciences Faculty, while most of the lecturers on history are content with a vague ethical idealism which derives from a muddled popular current of thought rather than from technical philosophy. The usual attitude of academic historians to the question of what is an historical fact is a simple belief in the possibility of giving an impartial account of what happened in the past, and an emphasis on the study of documents. But what actually happens is that the documents are always documents in the history of thought, and that the facts, except in early history, are rarely reported in any detail. The scientific notion of a significant generalisation is not understood at all, but generalisations are made which are consistent with bourgeois ideology as a whole, while being regarded as contributions to absolute truth. It has already been re-

marked that History in Cambridge is not related to Philosophy; its relation to the history of thought is a curious one, because it is often a substitute for it, but it never makes clear, except in criticising Catholic ideology in mediæval history (and this is consistent with the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie three hundred years ago), the relations between thought and action. The relation of History to Politics is not made clear; political theory is regarded often as an abstract study in association, as if there were a permanent problem of how to live in a community, running through all time, independently of particular historical circumstances. Contemporary politics are rarely related to the past, the curious but significant superstition existing that the story of the immediate past cannot be history at all. The relation of History to Literature is usually no more than a few short references to great writers who flourished, and no attempt is made to link up styles of art and architecture with the ideology of the time. Social History is regarded as a limited study of domestic living, looked at apparently for the fun of the thing, while such matters as industrial technique and the real facts of living in the past are not considered as material for history at all. The law and the constitution are typical fetishes of bourgeois history, and are treated abstractly with little relation to what actually happened, and, finally, economic history is set off as a mere minor and independent study. The whole sphere of wars and international relations is over-emphasised and treated in isolation.

A final point: Cambridge History is not merely class history, it is mainly national class history. This is a characteristic of capitalist provincialism and insularity, and is only slightly broken down by the inclusion of imperial history, always political and constitutional in emphasis. And then of course there is no need to empha-

sise the point that this history is narrowly academic, and unrelated not only to other branches of study, but also to the field of practical activity. In turning to the actual details of the Tripos, we must first of all criticise the lecture, set-book, and examination system. All three have the same effect; they are the weapons used to confine the student's attention to the aspects which the authorities wish to stress, and they usually prevent wider reading, and merely narrow and circumscribe the view of students who take them seriously.

The subjects of the Tripos come under the following four headings: General History, Constitutional History, Economic History, and Political Theory. Special periods are usually taken from one of these headings and often have a bias towards personalities.

PART I

English Constitutional.—Here the earlier history has the merit of presenting a class analysis, although with no conception of the class struggle. The economic background to legal forms is shown in, for instance, Maitland's* mediæval work. It would seem that the bourgeoisie is capable of writing the history of the feudal social order which it displaced, because it can free itself from the Catholic religious ideology, and because apart from that the chief documents are factual and not examples of bourgeois aspirations.

But this only applies to the best work, and in Stubbs the illusions of capitalist democracy are read back into the past as far as Magna Carta.* The treatment of the English bourgeois revolution is inadequate because it is represented as a stage in the achievement of some generalised 'liberty' which does not exist, and which is in fact the freedom of the capitalist class to set up its political state machine.

So far as more modern times are concerned, there is no explanation of the difference between capitalist aspirations and the actual unwilling eventualities, the forms of the law and the constitution and petty legal arguments being used to try and show that there is a homogeneous organised community represented by the capitalist state machine. The facts of 'British government' are not considered at all.

English Economic.—Here the chief characteristics are that strings of facts on industrial and agricultural history, often controversial, are learnt, with no coordinating synthesis other than the usual pathetic faith in progress in spite of all evils. The theoretical side of economics is not related to the fact of the past, because, of course, bourgeois economic theories are so confused that they cannot be made to show coherently how the capitalist system developed. There is also a tendency to concentrate on statutes applying to economics and local government, without attempting to show how often they were not applied at all. The true story of primary accumulation can for obvious reasons not be told by these historians, unless when they are dealing with foreign capitalist history.

Political Thought.—This subject is a vague study, and the mere choice of set books from Greek, mediæval and capitalist times, as if they all had the same problems and as if their theories were all part of a great continuous effort to find out the truth about political organisation, is enough to condemn it.

PART II

General European.—In this subject no unifying summary is made, the underlying conceptions being personality and national greatness. Attempts are made to give a view of economic factors, but with no correct

estimate of their importance. The material on European economic history existing in English is very inadequate. This subject should merge into world history, but it is noticeable that an extra-European view is taken only after the beginnings of imperialist exploitation, and without this reason being given. The general emphasis is on wars, monarchs, empty diplomatic abstractions, while there is little real explanation of the character of the reformed (bourgeois) religion.

Theory of the Modern State.—Here there is no analysis of the meaning of the capitalist state, but only barren metaphysical abstractions. It is true that *The Communist Manifesto* is now among the set books, and that the examiners will accept a disguised Marxism, but the orthodox view that is assumed is a simplified Hegelianism based on the work of the sentimental philanthropist, Bosanquet.* Here at least the Cambridge historians give a coherent account of their views. They often temper their Tory idealism with the traditional liberal idealism, and will have nothing to do with the radical materialism of early bourgeois writers, such as the utilitarians. This subject has a legal section, too, for it is easy to talk about law as if it were fact, and to dispute about rights and obligations on the plane of legal as well as of metaphysical abstraction. Several points are especially important: in the first place, it is assumed that the state is (or represents) the community, and if the community is analysed at all it is analysed structurally by institutions, and not functionally, *i.e.* according to the relations of production. The ethical approach is fundamental, it being asserted that the end of the state's existence is to promote the 'good' life. It is not explained how the end as an aspiration differs from the end as actually achieved, and no account is given of the difference between the activity of the conscious will and the actual determination of events by social forces. He-

gel, of course, does attempt to explain this by an idealist *tour-de-force*¹ that he borrowed from Rousseau, but the English idealists have no better theory than the conversational distinction between higher and lower natures. In a word, even considered from the point of view of capitalist philosophy at its most developed, the theory of the state given us by the Cambridge historians is inadequate, and when faced with the materialist revolutionary dialectic, it is helpless. Some of the historians realise this, and are driven to the view that it is useless to have a philosophical attitude to history at all, and we find the beginnings of a kind of agnosticism, or scepticism, very often among the very men who have come across the philosophy of the revolution, but are afraid to accept it, more through fear of losing their positions than from intellectual timidity, perhaps.

¹ **tour-de-force** (*фр.*)—трюк

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN WESTERN EUROPE

(Reprinted from 'Cambridge Left,' Spring, 1934)

I

TO UNDERSTAND the mechanics of the class struggle in the capitalist countries, and in particular the highest point of the struggle since 1921—the fight of the Austrian workers against Fascism—it is necessary first of all to be clear on two points concerning the nature of the crisis and the nature of Fascism.

1. What is the fundamental cause of the present crisis? It is the contradiction between the highly developed productive forces, mass-production with an extensive division of labour, and the property-relation whereby an individual producer appropriates the product of this social labour. That is to say, the working masses can only buy back, under the existing scheme of property-relations, a fraction of what they produce. The surplus has to be exported: and this can only be done with a continually expanding market. The division of the world market is now almost complete. We are in the period of the general crisis of capitalism, from which no permanent recovery is possible, and from which individual countries can only improve their position at the expense of others by economic warfare (dumping, tariff-war—which further intensify the crisis by narrowing the home market) and ultimately by open war for the re-division of the world market. That war has already begun in the Far East and in South America.

If this analysis is correct, what is the reason for the apparent recovery of 1933, whose symptoms are the slight decline in unemployment and the sharp rise in production? The answer is, that it is exclusively of a military-inflationist character; that is, it is either based on the production of war-materials, or else it is speculative production, based not on any increased market, but simply on a desperate and unfounded hope that sales will increase.

This is borne out by all the statistics available for 1933. Kuusinen, in his report to the Thirteenth Plenum of the Communist International, gives the following statistics:

In the U.S.A. the output of steel increased by 3,800,000 tons.

In France the output of pig iron and steel rose 24 per cent.

In England the output of pig iron and steel increased 30 per cent; in Japan, 23 per cent.

In Germany the index of production (1924-100) rose from 64.1 to 74 in the course of the year. *But this increase was only in the steel, iron, coal and automobile industries. In all other industries the level was lower even than 1932.*

The shares of Vickers, Schneider-Creuzot, Skoda, Krupp, and Bofors* all rose in value; the dividends remained stable or increased.

In so far as other industries have 'recovered,' as in the United States cotton industry, the pick-up was purely speculative, and in many cases already the decline has set in. So the conclusion is: since war materials find no ultimate consumer in the market, and since the money to buy them must therefore remain a drag on the other industries which impedes recovery, war-production further degrades the whole structure of economy.

We are heading straight for war; it is on war that the 'recovery' mongers are speculating, and on no fundamental chance of improvement within the existing system.

2. Faced with this position, the political problems facing the ruling class are:

- (1) To transfer the main weight of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working class.
- (2) To exploit to the maximum the divisions in the various class forces whose interests are opposed to it, and to win over the petty bourgeoisie, and as large a stratum of the backward workers and peasants as possible, to the side of big capital against the working-class movement.
- (3) To protect itself from revolution in the event of war breaking out.

This it achieves through Fascism. Fascism strives to cripple the working-class movement by murdering and torturing its leaders, suppressing its legal organisations and press, removing the right to strike in defence of wages and conditions, and all political rights whatsoever. Fascism exploits the Nationalist feelings of the petty bourgeoisie to divert their hostility towards the existing regime by whipping up a chauvinist frenzy against some foreign scapegoat—in Germany the Jews; in Poland the Ukrainian minority.

But it is of fundamental importance to be under no illusions as to the class basis of Fascism. It is the dictatorship of big capital, although its terrorist troops may be drawn from the petty bourgeoisie. It is only necessary to show the class-composition of Hitler's 'General Economic Council,'* of whom nine are industrialists, four are bankers, and two are big agrarians. It is not accidental that Hitler has not carried out a single detail of the 'Socialist' side of his programme, which included

nationalisation of the trusts, the banks, and the big department stores.

This is of great importance, because it shows that there is nothing revolutionary about Fascism. Although the forms of rule may be different, the class-content is the same. Fascism develops quite logically out of capitalist democracy—it is in no sense a revolutionary break with it. What we are witnessing is a process of fasciation through the democratic machinery. Brüning, von Papen, and Schleicher* 'constitutionally' prepared the way for Hindenburg* to invite Hitler (also 'constitutionally', through the single loophole in the 'water-tight' Weimar constitution*) to power. At no period was there a revolutionary overthrow of the democracy. And those gentlemen who talk about democracy versus dictatorship are therefore completely distorting the actual historical process.

What is the attitude of the working-class movement to these developments?

Let us take first of all the Second International. The Second International still contains the majority of the Social Democratic parties of Europe. The main basis of its formation was the buying off of certain sections of the better-paid strata of the working class by the granting of social reforms, and winning them to the belief that a peaceful, democratic road to Socialism was possible, because capitalism was able to surmount its crises, and the centralisation of the means of production would one day evolve into Socialism. There is no need to go into a lengthy theoretical disproof of this theory when historical practice has so conclusively demonstrated its falsity. It is necessary only to note that by slurring over the question of the ownership of the means of production it also evades the question of the conquest of power. The insistence on the 'democratic' transition to Socialism against 'dictatorship' and 'bloody revolution' has

in practice led to the defence of the 'democratic' bourgeois rule against the revolutionary working class, while all the time the 'democratic' bourgeois is behind their backs preparing for Fascism. In the last resort Social Democracy is driven to take up arms in defence of democracy—against the working class (15,000 were killed when the Social Democrats put down the Spartacus revolt; 60,000 arrests were made by the Labour Government in India). Even after the crisis and the introduction of Fascism, the Social Democrats remain true to themselves to the last. Ten years ago the German Social Democrats told us how Germany was different from a backward country like Italy, and that in 'democratic' Germany the peaceful transition to Socialism is still possible. And now we still hear that England is 'different' from Germany.

In their defence of 'democracy' the Social Democrats have always been compelled to refuse united action with the Communists. True to themselves to the last, the German Social Democrats in 1932 at the Presidential elections instructed their supporters to vote for the 'democrat' Hindenburg against the only workers' candidate, the Communist Thaelmann, under the slogan 'Wähl Hindenburg—Schlag Hitler.'¹ And less than a year later Hindenburg 'constitutionally' called Hitler to power!

With the deepening crisis the influence of the Communists increased rapidly. So in order to preserve its independence, and at the same time preserve the support of the workers, Social Democracy is compelled to face in two directions—to show the bourgeoisie its absolute loyalty and to present to the revolutionary workers revolutionary phrases without giving any lead in the immediate struggles. The new 'revolutionary' programme

¹ 'Wähl Hindenburg—Schlag Hitler.' (нем.)—«Избирайте Гинденбурга—ударьте по Гитлеру!»

of what is left of German Social Democracy contains not a single mention of the word strike. And this is typical. D.Z. Manuilsky, at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, describes the process as follows:

We are for Socialism but without the proletarian revolution, the Second International announces.

We are for the proletarian revolution but without the proletarian dictatorship, declares the German Social Democracy. We are solely for the restoration of democracy. We are for the proletarian dictatorship, but ask the Comintern to make an exception of Scandinavia, where democracy is still possible, declares Friedrich Adler.*

We are for organisational unity, but against the united front, the Second International announces.

And the former Spanish Minister, Largo Caballero,* comments on this thesis in the following manner: There exists no difference between us and the Communists. What is the use of amalgamating if we are already the same?

The Roosevelt programme is our programme, says the Second International.

The Roosevelt programme is the programme of Italian Fascism, replies Mussolini.

Not reforms, but the question of power is on the day, blusters the Second International.

We are prepared to seize power if the President of the Republic calls on us, replies the Socialist Party of France.

In the English Labour Party we see a division of labour between the 'Rights,' Citrine* and Henderson* and Co., vying with each other in praise for Roosevelt and the League of Nations and abuse of the U.S.S.R.,

while the 'Lefts,' Cripps and Cole, tell the workers of the wonderful things they will do when they come to power,* and if then they are in control of the Labour Party. Objectively both hold back the struggle of the workers against the National Government* here and now. Both reject the united front, though the 'Lefts' assure us that they are doing so only because of Party discipline. When the lessons of Germany and Austria cry out for working-class unity here and now, still they hold back the workers from immediate and direct united action by telling them that all they have to do is to wait three years till the next election. True to themselves to the last. . . .

In sharp opposition to the theory and practice of the democratic transition from Capitalism to Socialism stands the Communist International. It has always resolutely put forward the slogan of class against class. It has continually emphasised that the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system of production will inevitably lead to a crisis from which only the conquest of power by the working class is a way out. In the period of stabilisation from 1924-29, when Tarnow, the leader of the German Social Democratic trade unions, was talking of Ford as more revolutionary than Marx, when the English I.L.P.* leaders were saying that American prosperity had proved the Marxian theory of crisis and the law of the absolute impoverishment of the working class to be out of date, only the Communist International foretold the crash and consistently advocated the revolutionary way out. The Communist International repeatedly declared that bourgeois democracy, so long as the means of production and of propaganda—press, wireless, cinema—remain in the hands of the capitalists, can be constitutionally converted overnight into Fascism by means of special powers, emergency laws, etc. Whilst the land and the factories, the police and the

armed forces, remain in the hands of the capitalists, the political rights of the worker can be removed at a moment's notice without the least difficulty—unless the working class is prepared to take up a revolutionary stand against the capitalist class.

There is no need to make an elaborate theoretical justification of this policy here. History has proved its correctness.

And it was because of its correct understanding of history that the Communist International was able to develop correct organisational forms to meet the tasks confronting it. Only the Communists could see the necessity of building up a highly organised system of Party nuclei at the keypoints of industry and transport, in the streets and in the factories, wherever the workers live and work. Only the Communist Party saw the necessity of doing systematic, illegal work in the armed forces.

But it is nevertheless true that the Communist Parties have lagged behind the development of the crisis. In some countries systematic police terror was able partially to break down their contact with the mass of the workers. In others the exposure of the Social Democrats was not conducted with sufficient clarity, with the result that the Party was isolated from the Social Democratic workers. The practice of factory work and work in the trade unions lagged behind the theory. And though 1932-33 saw a rapid growth in the power and influence of the Communist Parties all over Europe, yet where Fascism struck its heaviest blow—in Germany—the Party, having only the advanced section of the workers behind it, was forced to retreat, rather than ensure the destruction of the vanguard of the workers without the masses behind them. It was not destroyed, as the gentlemen who believe in 'peaceful means' would have us think. One has only to read the statements of Hitler, Goering, and Göbbels to realise that it has maintained its organisa-

tion and is carrying on the struggle. The circulation of the illegal press of the C.P.* is greater than its legal circulation, and even a Berlin chief-of-police is compelled to admit that more than half is printed in Germany. The factory work is better now than ever before. In Germany, and all over Europe, the working class has not been defeated by the Fascist terror. It is moving on to the counter-offensive.

That is the background against which the Austrian rising took place.

II

Just as in a strike, the exact point at which the workers down tools may be some apparently quite trivial incident—a single case of victimisation—and to this single incident is attached the whole accumulated bitterness of years of exploitation, so some incident of seemingly minor importance can give the signal for a revolutionary outbreak which challenges the whole rotten system. The sharp revolutionary struggle in Western Europe began with the Anarchist workers' putsch in Spain. The putsch was probably inspired by reactionary provocation, and might have ended in a little senseless shooting, as previous attempts had done. But on this occasion the Spanish working classes, at the peak point of political activity and enthusiasm after the recent elections, followed the lead of the Anarchists. Although the Communist Party saw clearly that at that moment successful insurrection was impossible, yet to have stood aside when the masses of the workers were moving into action would have forfeited their confidence for years to come. So the Communist Party of Spain threw all its forces into the struggle and converted it from a senseless terroristic putsch into a serious political struggle of the working class. The struggle was defeated. But the work-

ing-class movement has not been defeated; and the Communist Party of Spain, both for its correct political analysis before the outbreak and its resolute leadership during the struggle, stands out more clearly than ever before as the real leader of the Spanish workers.

And it was the revolutionary struggle in Spain which set light to the smouldering indignation of the French working class. The Stavisky scandal* threw into very sharp relief the whole rottenness and corruptness of the capitalist regime. As the Democrat Deputy Dulot said: 'This time it is perhaps the trial of the ruling classes, opened through the prosecution of the profiteers.'

Fascism made a tremendous effort to exploit the mass movement for its own purposes. For the first time something like a Fascist mass youth movement was launched. But they were not altogether successful in capturing the leadership. After the first Royalist demonstrations had been fired on, the working class took the affairs into its own hands, under the leadership of the Communist Party and of the Red Trade Unions. For five hours on 9th February a fierce fight took place for the possession of the streets. Hundreds were wounded, and several killed by revolver bullets. A united general protest strike was called for the Monday, and it met with a practically unanimous response. On the 16th a mass demonstration under the leadership of the Communist Party to the funeral of six of the killed workers was attended by 200,000 workers. And though now the working-class movement has temporarily subsided, it has at no point been defeated. At any moment it may flare up again.

The barricade fighting in the streets of Paris was, as it were, the link in the chain of the revolutionary upsurge that connects the Austrian with the Spanish rising. In Austria, for years the Social Democratic Party had been in a practically unchallenged position. Every fourth worker was a member. They had won complete control

after the war—and exercised it in the interests of the capitalists. Although an extensive system of social services and public works had been built up, the land and the factories remained the property of the capitalist class. After the war Social Democracy stood in between the workers and a decisive blow against capitalism. When the first revolutionary wave of 1919-21 had subsided, the capitalists bit by bit regained their footing in the State. In March 1933, after Dollfuss* had captured power by a very narrow majority at a previous election, although the Social Democrats still had behind them the mass of the workers, and still had important key points in the local administration, Dollfuss was able silently to dispose of Parliament. The bourgeois Liberal *New Statesman* describes the policy of the Social Democrats in the months that followed, like this:

What is the Socialist Party's record during the long months of violation of the Republican Constitution,* of incessant provocation to the workers and challenges to their leaders since last March? Dr. Otto Bauer, the political genius of the Party, has given in interviews a list of concrete efforts made by the Socialists to come to an agreement with Dr. Dollfuss which would have enabled a united democratic front to be formed to combat the Nazi terror. He declares that every attempt—even that of a conditional offer to give Dollfuss the power to govern for two years without Parliament, was shattered on the determination of Dollfuss ... to establish autocratic rule in Austria and destroy the democratic Republic.

It is the same old story. In the interests of preserving bourgeois democracy against dictatorship, the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the system is sabotaged, the united front with the Communist Party is rejected

while an offer of a united front is made to the bourgeoisie, who then quite calmly introduce Fascism over the heads of a divided and paralysed working-class movement. As the *New Statesman* goes on to say: 'Surely no reactionaries ever had a harder task in provoking conflict with the "Left" than Dollfuss and Fey.' The Social Democrats meekly allowed themselves to be kicked out of one position after another, until all chance of a successful struggle was gone.

But meanwhile the influence of their Party was necessarily declining among the workers. More and more the small and weak Austrian Communist Party was building up a united front, not with Dollfuss against Hitlerism, but of the working class against capitalism. The strike wave was rising.

On 30th January, the Heimwehr* occupied the capital of the Tyrol, Innsbruck, on a pretext of 'defensive action' against the Nazis. On 7th February, the Upper Austrian Heimwehr followed suit. They marched into Linz and Steyr (strongholds of Social Democratic administration) and demanded the installation of Government Commissioners.

On 10th February, Dollfuss demanded the 'reorganisation' of the State. The Social Democratic premises in Vienna were smashed up, and the workers' clubs in Innsbruck. At this point the Communist Party, in its illegal paper, launched the slogan: 'Crush Fascism before it crushes you! Down tools at once, strike, elect committees of action to lead the struggle in every factory! Disarm the Fascists! The weapons into the hands of the workers! General strike! Away with the Government of hangmen!' The edition was enthusiastically received. But the Communist Party was too small to launch the struggle by itself.

On 10th February, Herr Seitz, the Social Democrat Mayor of Vienna, was deprived of all control of the po-

lice force. In spite of the fact that they had repeatedly declared they would defend the constitutional rights of Vienna, the Social Democratic Party for two critical days sat still and did nothing. But on 12th February, when the police began searching for arms in the workers' quarters in Linz, the working class took matters into its own hands and fought back fiercely. All over Austria the struggle broke out whilst the leadership of the Social Democratic Party was still discussing what legal avenues were left open to it. . . .

Without a well-tryed revolutionary leadership, without a carefully organised plan of insurrection, after two fatal days had been allowed to slip by whilst the Fascists consolidated their position, the insurrection was doomed to defeat before it started. But it was an example of the astonishing power of the workers' movement that it was able to throw up its own leadership, and work out its own plan of action. For nearly a week a desperate struggle was carried on, during which the Fascists were forced to bring out artillery against their own working class. The whole of the working class was flung into action, or else the revolution could not possibly have lasted for that length of time. In spite of their inferiority of armament, in spite of the lack of leadership, yet the working class, once it had taken the road of revolutionary struggle followed without hesitation and carried on the struggle until all their arms were exhausted. And meanwhile Dollfuss, with tears trickling down his cheeks, as he declared that it was the saddest week in his life, busily set to work hanging the wounded prisoners.

III

What are the main lessons of the Austrian rising? First of all, it explodes completely all the reactionary ideas that have been brought forward that it is impos-

sible for the working class to capture power by revolutionary means. Kuusinen writes in his speech to the Thirteenth Plenum:

This experience has shown that the opportunities for police and troops to use many types of arms in towns where insurgents can hide in houses and utilise the tactical advantages of this or that block of houses is very restricted. In these conditions the insurgents are able to utilise various types of passive and active weapons against the military-technical resources of the Government. It is sufficient to recall the Hamburg rebellion,* or the street-fighting in Chapei,* where barricades and hastily dug trenches served as serious obstacles to the movements of armoured cars. Hand-to-hand fighting in towns, the fighting for every single house and every single corner calls for tremendous moral firmness on the part of the troops, and serious fighting threatens to demoralise them.

The Austrian rising is yet another practical demonstration of the power of the working class to conquer by direct revolutionary tactics.

They were defeated, but they were not defeated because they took up arms. They were defeated because they were not under the leadership of a revolutionary party. What concretely did this mean? It meant in the first place that no plan of organised insurrection had been worked out beforehand, and there was no experienced leadership. The movement had to throw up its own leaders. It meant that the struggle began in an unorganised way after the correct moment had gone by. It meant that there had been no systematic illegal work in the armed forces to bring them over to the revolution. It meant that there were no experienced nuclei of revo-

lutionary forces inside the factories to lead and guide the struggle before and after the insurrection.

But the temporary defeat of the Austrian workers is not a defeat for the international working class. Only in one small sector, where the revolutionary movement was backward and isolated, has the working class been beaten back, and that only after a tremendous struggle. The absolute necessity of revolutionary leadership for a successful armed struggle is made clearer than ever before to the European working class. And as the decisive struggles rapidly approach, so by the example of the Austrian movement will the working class gather strength in its own power to overthrow capitalism by direct struggle, and throw aside the gentlemen who prefer the 'democratic' road to Fascism to the revolutionary road to Soviet power.

LEFT?

(Reprinted from 'Cambridge Left.'
Winter, 1933-34)

FINALLY, as the class struggle nears its decisive stage, disintegration of the ruling class and the old order of society becomes so active, so acute, that a small part of the ruling class breaks away to make common cause with the revolutionary class, the class which holds the future in its hands. Just as in former days, part of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now part of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat. Especially does this happen in the case of some of the bourgeois ideologists, who have achieved theoretical understanding of the historical movement as a whole.—*The Communist Manifesto*, 1848.

In England in the literary field this tendency has expressed itself chiefly in the revolutionary fermentation in the work of the younger poets—W.H. Auden, Charles Madge, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Richard Goodman, H.V. Kemp.* As the crisis deepens, the situation more and more urgently demands a choice between revolution and reaction. The collapse into subjectivity of Eliot,* Joyce,* or Pound* shows more and more clearly the fate of those who refuse to admit the necessity of choice. The traditional artist's 'impartiality'* is unmasked as a denial of the class struggle—as a powerful

instrument in the hands of the possessing class who would prefer to keep in their hands the means of production without a struggle. And the bankruptcy of the older writers—for the most part comfortably assured of a parasitic position under the present system—becomes clearer and clearer to the younger writers, faced with unemployment, with no prospect of living as writers, and for the first time beginning to consider objectively the causes and the way out of the position with which they and we are faced.

Thus there are the beginnings of a politically-conscious revolutionary literature for the first time in the history of English culture. At the same time there exists side by side with it a very dangerous attempt to deck out the old class literature in new revolutionary-utopian trappings, to exploit the leftward movement among the younger students and intellectuals in order to serve up the old dope in a 'revolutionary' form, to make a literary fashion of 'revolution' among bourgeois intellectuals whilst denying the possibility of the growth of a genuinely revolutionary literature with a new class-basis. The fashionable reactionary critics confuse the two tendencies; it is in their interests to do so. And it is not easy to make a clear demarcation between them. Often they exist side by side in the work of a single writer. But as the crisis matures the division becomes clearer. And the differentiation is essential to the growth of a revolutionary literature. It is essential that this second tendency should be ruthlessly exposed, or otherwise the movement will be poisoned at its source. It is the task of this essay to provide a basis for this demarcation.

The fundamental antagonism of these two tendencies was exposed most clearly in a recent controversy between Stephen Spender and Charles Madge on the question of Poetry and Revolution. The question disputed was the fundamental question of the objective participa-

tion of the writer in the class-struggle. Spender's article is so significant as to be worth quoting in detail.

Of human activities, writing poetry is one of the least revolutionary. The states of being a rentier, a merchant, a capitalist, contribute their bits to revolution, they actively crumble (!) But the writing of a poem in itself solves the poem's problem. If a poem is not complete in itself, if its content spills over into our world of confused emotions, then it is a bad poem. . . .

This is very interesting, because it is in seemingly complete contradiction to the revolutionary-utopian expressions of some of his poetry. It shows quite clearly that Spender adheres to the doctrine that has become fundamental to the bourgeois writers of our epoch—the contradiction between art and life, between the life of the artist and the life of society. The world of the artist is considered as a metaphysical abstraction unrelated to the world in which he lives, which produced him and his art. In so far as he is related to it, it is as the 'impartial' observer.

And here is a fundamental confusion—a confusion between the 'impartiality' of the bourgeois writer and the objectivity of the revolutionary writer. Bourgeois 'impartiality' is a denial of the objective fact of the class struggle, a deliberate self-protection from the conclusion to which an objective study of the world to-day will lead. But there is no middle position between revolution and reaction. Not to take sides is to support the *status quo*,¹ to prefer to leave things as they are rather than risk losing one's own position, and thus to remain indirectly an instrument of reaction. But an objective study of the

¹ *status quo* (лат.)—существующее положение вещей

world as it is to-day, an objective contrast between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union, between the conditions of bourgeoisie and proletariat in this country, can lead to only one conclusion—a revolutionary conclusion, which bourgeois ‘impartiality’ strives to mask.

And so the objective writer cannot remain a ‘detached’ observer of society. He must actively participate in the revolutionary struggles of society if he is not going to collapse into the super-subjectivity of the older writers. He must emphatically deny the contradiction between art and life.

In his reply to Stephen Spender, Charles Madge showed himself more or less clearly aware of this. He realises that there is no ideal poets’ world unrelated to the reality.

The problem which the poem solves is not the poem’s but the poet’s problem. As a consequence of the poem it is the poet, or his reader, who moves. There is no world but the world and that world is the poem’s world.

And yet his reply is inadequate. He does nothing to clarify the subjective confusions and contradictions, into which Spender has fallen, by reducing them to an objective terminology. Against Spender’s counter-revolutionary dogmas he offsets his own revolutionary dogmas. This is not due to an accidental lack of clarity of exposition. It is due to a contradiction in the work even of the genuinely revolutionary and leftward moving poets.

This is not hard to explain. It is because, although politically they have rejected their class, they are still writing mainly for it. Their training as writers has been a direct barrier to the writing of straightforward revolutionary poetry which can only be overcome by direct participation in revolutionary struggles. C. Day Lewis makes great play of the fact that Lawrence,* who came

from the working class, is not read by the working class. But this is true precisely because he cut himself off from his class, because he became so isolated from it that he ceased to represent it. In a passage in *The Rainbow* he gives an extraordinarily clear and moving description of class oppression. But, as he himself was divorced from industry and never participated in a single struggle of his class, he never conceived of it acting as a unit to emancipate itself. Thus, instead of struggling against class oppression and exploitation, he railed against 'industrialism,' and ran half round the world looking for an escape into some more primitive non-industrial form of life. The working class is not in a position to run round the world looking for an escape from 'industrialism.' That is why it does not read Lawrence. It may seem contradictory to believe that these young intellectual writers can more directly write for the workers than could the miner's son, Lawrence. But who represented the interests of the workers, the ex-railwayman, Jimmy Thomas,* or Lenin, who was by his class-origin cut off from industry?

This contradiction is as transient a phenomenon as the disintegration of the bourgeoisie. It can no more become the basis of a lasting literary movement than the section of left-moving intellectuals can become a permanent class differentiated from bourgeoisie and proletariat. The lesson of Germany shows perfectly clearly that as the crisis matures, choice between one side or the other is demanded by the conditions of existence. Only a particular and temporary set of historical circumstances can allow this section to appear for a time as an independent class which is not compelled to throw in its full weight with bourgeoisie or proletariat. As the struggle develops, they must follow the process they have started to its logical conclusion—active participation in the class struggle. For within the framework of dying

Of such verse Madge correctly observes:

They get relief from speaking of the horrors they have seen and from pictures fulfilling their wish for a better world.

This poetry is only a kind of Utopian wish-fulfilment. It is not the poetry of revolutionary struggle. It is the poetry of revolution as a literary fashion, not as an historic reality. No wonder Spender is the pet of the bourgeois-liberal critics. If this is the revolution, then there is no need to fear such an idealist romantic affair! But this is not the revolution. This is only the intelligentsia playing at revolution.

And to realise the full difference between these two tendencies, compare Stephen Spender's

The architectural gold-leaved flower
From people ordered like a single mind,
I build.

with Louis Aragon's

I am a witness to the crushing of a world out of date,
I am a witness drunkenly to the stamping out of the
bourgeois.

Was there ever a finer chase than the chase we give
to that vermin which flattens itself in every nook of
the cities

I sing the violent domination of the bourgeoisie by
the proletariat
for the annihilation of that bourgeoisie,
for the total annihilation of that bourgeoisie.

There can be no doubt that the future is with the revolutionary participator and not the 'impartial' observ-

er, nor the romantic utopian idealist. And just as out of the rise to power of the bourgeoisie, out of the violent shattering of the feudal remnants, out of the violent expropriation of the independent producers, was born the tremendous revolutionary movement of the Elizabethan drama,* so out of the violent struggle for power between bourgeoisie and proletariat, as the Communist Party in this country develops from its sectarian beginnings to a mass revolutionary party, there will arise a revolutionary literature stronger and more various than any which preceded it.

COMMUNISM IN THE UNIVERSITIES

*(Reprinted from 'Young Minds for Old,' 1936, edited
by Lincoln Ralphs, published by Fredrick Muller
Ltd., by kind permission of editor and publisher)*

THE LAST few years have seen a considerable growth of Communist influence in the universities. That influence has often been over-estimated, particularly by the Right Wing Press after the Oxford motion. But none the less it persists and it is growing. It is no longer a phenomenon that can be dismissed as an outburst of transient youthful enthusiasm. It has established itself so firmly that any serious analysis of trends in the universities must take it into account.

This influence has shown itself in a steadily growing volume of left-wing activities. In 1933 the storm aroused by the famous Oxford 'King and Country' motion* swept every university, and in the majority of Unions this motion was passed by a large margin. That same winter the students of Cambridge got themselves into the newspapers by a 11th November* demonstration which successfully kept a three-mile march unbroken, fighting almost the whole way against students who were trying to break it up. In 1934 the Hunger Marchers* received a great welcome from the students of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1935 the Northern Universities put themselves on the map when Sheffield students played a real part in the unemployment fight in February. For a few days Sheffield Communist students sold over 200 copies of

the *Daily Worker* in a university of 800 students. At the end of 1935 it was significant how rapidly student opinion reacted to the Hoare-Laval plan.* At very short notice big protest meetings were held at King's College, London, the London School of Economics, and Manchester. It would perhaps be true to say that the students reacted more quickly than any other organised body. Then at the beginning of this year the Federation of Student Societies, the revolutionary students' organisation, and the University Labour Federation formed a united body covering 2,000 students in all the universities. During all this period the membership of the Communist Party, though even now not very large, has grown steadily and continuously without once looking back.

Of course it would be wrong to represent this movement as wholly and solely the work of the Communist Party. But it is none the less true that everywhere the Communists have played a continuously active and leading part, and that the disciplined and centralised leadership of the Communist Party has given the movement a direction and co-ordination of which no other body would be capable.

Thus Communism in the universities is a serious force. It is serious because students do not easily or naturally become Communists. Communism has to fight down more prejudices, more traditions, more simple distortions of fact, than any other political organisation. It would not have gained ground without a serious appeal. Its significance is precisely this. It is the first systematic attempt by a working-class party to win over a whole section of the middle class. The Labour Party has made many efforts to adapt itself to middle-class prejudices. It has never made a serious attempt to win the middle classes into a fighting alliance with the Labour Movement on the basis of their own interests. That is what the Communist Party is just beginning to do. It is no-

table that the Central Committee of the Communist Party pays far more attention, gives far more criticism and more assistance, to the work of its student members than any other political body gives to its student section.

This swing to the Left has not come primarily because students are interested in politics in the abstract. It has come because the actual conditions of their lives, the actual problems with which they are confronted, force them steadily though hesitatingly to a revolutionary position. Because a student does not have to be interested in politics before he comes face to face with one great reality. The existence of the capitalist structure of society means that there is an ever-widening gap between the potentialities of science, technique, culture, and education, and their actual application in the world to-day. The most glaringly obvious form of this is the destruction of foodstuffs when people are hungry. But students for the most part are not yet hungry, and do not come up against this. But a medical student comes up against the fact, for example, that hundreds of children suffer every year from rickets, which is an unnecessary and preventable disease, simply because of poverty, and bad conditions, and the lack of adequate attention. An economic or an agricultural student will notice that the immense productive capacities of industry and agriculture are not being used—not because there is no need for industrial goods and foodstuffs, but because the capitalist property relations cannot overcome this widening gap. The whole field of British industry and agriculture to-day presents a picture of productive waste that capitalism cannot overcome, of preventable deaths and preventable accidents that are not prevented because no employer profits from preventing them, of preventable diseases that are not prevented because our present rulers find it more important to spend money on interest on

war debt and on huge rearmament than on the health of the English people.

And this shows itself to the students in an increasing restriction of their possibilities in their future life. Already the professions are overstocked with qualified graduates. People with Firsts* who, a few years ago, turned up their noses at teaching jobs are now glad enough to get a job in a secondary school. Medicos with first class qualifications will take the wretched job of a ship's doctor which they would not have touched not so long ago. I have known one case of a graduate with first class honours in zoology with a job as a rat catcher at 30 s. a week. Scientific papers have been printing advertisements for men with first class degrees at £ 125 a year. And the number of totally unemployed is mounting up: and unemployment for a middle-class person who does not sign on at a Labour Exchange results in a kind of hopelessness and isolation that is quite unique. The number of ex-students peddling vacuum cleaners and tooth paste for a living is mounting up. One point is worth bearing in mind. If during this upward movement, the 1935-36 'boom',* the professions are gradually becoming overstocked and saturated with qualified students—what will be the position when the next crash comes? It is not impossible that whole years of graduates will be 70-80 per cent unemployed. The colossal nervous strain of competitive examinations on students who depend on the results for their whole future career means that even now a student's life is not so happy and care-free as is generally supposed. As to those who are just coming up to the universities to graduate, the outlook will be far more tough for them than it is for us now.

This general economic insecurity has its effects. Of course it does not of itself make revolutionaries. But ultimately all the secure prejudices and traditions of

the English middle and professional classes depended on a stable and more or less well-provided environment. This comfortable life is breaking up, and with it the comfortable illusions which it fostered.

There is another process also at work. The developments of the post-war years have brought about revolutionary changes in the relation of every branch of knowledge to society. The official academic teaching is for the most part incapable of reaction to these developments, and is thus becoming more and more isolated from social reality. For instance, while the world economic crisis 1929-32 was raging, the equilibrium economists of the London School of Economics did not find it necessary to bring forward any attempt at crisis analysis, and went on quite happily teaching the theory which explained why crisis did not and in the nature of things could not have a serious effect. It is not very surprising then that from that time certain students began to turn to Marxism, which had consistently predicted the crisis, and which had consistently based its analysis on the real world. To take another example. There is a course in the Cambridge History Tripos called *The Theory of the Modern State*. But in 1936 we are still being taught what was very 'up-to-date' in 1906. The course nowhere says what a Soviet is, nowhere makes room for an analysis of Fascism, is completely incapable of dealing with any modern political development. Is it then very surprising that students with a live interest in actual political developments should turn increasingly to Marxism, which alone can give a complete and self-consistent political analysis and a clear guide to action?

The same radicalisation infects to a growing extent all those students who are primarily interested in art and literature. And in the universities there are probably more people who read—and write—poetry and stories than in almost any other non-professional section. It is

not primarily as yet the superior ability of revolutionary writers—although when André Gide* joins the Communist Party and E. M. Forster* appears on an anti-Fascist platform it causes people to think. It is rather the feeling the society they live in has very little use for art or literature, and the increasing understanding that over in the U.S.S.R. the reverse is true. Only a few of the Soviet writers like Sholokhov and of the non-Russian Communist writers like André Malraux* have as yet any big reputation. But what is increasingly significant is that whereas over here a writer has got to turn out slush if he is going to be a best seller, and a serious and advanced writer almost certainly cannot make a living from his books alone, precisely the contrary is true of Russia. The Russian literary market is immense and insatiable. A writer in England is extraordinarily lucky if his books sell 60,000—it is quite an event. In Russia the number of novelists and poets (non-Communist as well as Communist) with sales over the 1,000,000 mark is considerable, and the number who circulate in the hundreds of thousands is very large indeed. The best of the Russian writers read their stories and poems to a meeting of hundreds of workers, where they are publicly discussed and criticised. And that seems quite usual in Russia. But the idea of T. S. Eliot or even left wingers like W. H. Auden reading their stuff to gatherings of miners or metal workers would seem ridiculous over here—so narrow and isolated is the literary public, and art so divorced from the lives and interests of the masses. But what more and more people realise is that in Russia the best of the writers are valued, encouraged, and assisted, in a way that contrasts startlingly with the official patronage of the Royal Academy and the Poet Laureate over here. And for those who are seriously concerned with the future of art, who feel, as more and more people feel, that if it is to have a future it must

break out of its present isolation and irrelevance, this example is not without its influence.

Finally there are the direct political results of the crisis. Hatred and fear of war are very deeply rooted amongst the middle classes. If he wishes to get support for a rearmament programme, a Conservative has got to pretend that it is in order to preserve the peace, or he will not be listened to. Pacifism has had its deepest roots amongst the middle classes, to a far greater extent than in the more realistic working-class movement. But the fiasco of the disarmament conference cruelly extinguished any rosy illusions about a secure and easy path for peace under capitalism. And Manchuria and Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia have provided a very convincing proof of the Communist thesis that wars arise out of the economic necessity forcing capitalist nations to imperial expansion. There is always a tendency amongst students to throw up their hands in horror, to talk about a world gone mad, to bury their heads in the sand and hope that the storm will miss them. But for those who are prepared to face the complexities of the situation, to face up to the dangers and difficulties in a realistic way, the revolutionary solution seems more and more necessary and inevitable. The next war will produce more Wilfrid Owens* and less Rupert Brookes.* And here, too, the consistent and unwavering fight of the U.S.S.R. to preserve the peace at almost any cost, its willingness to make any concession for peace and its complete freedom from any aggressive aims, is contrasting more and more sharply with the military antics of the Fascist powers and the shiftiness and two-faced policies of the governments of 'democratic' Britain and France.

1933 marked the beginning of a big political change. The excesses of Hitler Fascism shocked and horrified the middle classes. It was not so much the attack on work-

ing class organizations and working-class standards of living that affected them. It was the murderous persecution of the Jews, the Liberals, the leading scientists and writers, the wholesale destruction of democratic liberties, the barbarous and nonsensical race theories. For a long time the Liberals fought manfully to hide from the reality and cried that Fascism and Communism were the same thing. But reality is proving too strong even for them. It is becoming more and more patently clear that Soviet Communism not only stands for peace but is winning all along the line on the economic front, whereas Fascism is heading for war and economic disaster. For a long time the cry still went up that they are both alike because there is no freedom. But even here the fog is dispersing. Publicists like Shaw, social investigators like the Webbs,* have a considerable influence on the middle classes. And when both proclaim that the Soviet system is in certain respects that highest form of democracy yet seen, those students and intellectuals who are not too prejudiced to face reality at all begin slowly to revise their opinions.

And in every sphere the influence of the U.S.S.R. begins to make itself felt. It is not so much the economic victories. To a worker the fact that crisis and unemployment, the exploitation of class by class, have been wiped out, is far more significant than to a student, who in most cases has not felt personally the effects of economic crises. Unless he is a technician, statistics of production will not have for him the significance which they possess in fact. But the educational, cultural, and scientific successes of Socialism make a far deeper impression. And the Soviet fight for peace even more so. Now that the grim fight on the economic front has been decided, the life of the Soviets will seem a far more free, vigorous, and attractive life than ever it seemed five years ago.

Thus Communism is beginning to become a force in the universities, not because of any sudden wave of youthful romantic idealism (although in certain places that also plays its part), but because the very conditions of a student's life bring him up against a whole complex of problems to which only the revolutionaries are giving or even attempting to give, a consistent solution. Of course the development is not easy or smooth. The middle classes do not surrender their comfortable illusions without a fight. There is a large section that is not yet faced with a decision, and will at all costs cling to the shreds of the 'independent' Liberal position, whilst they are sufficiently secure to blindfold themselves. And, of course, Communists often lose potential supporters by their own mistakes. Anti-Communist prejudices and traditions are so strong that to make any headway at all Communists must work hard and patiently: and they are damaged by any mistakes they make far more than any other political party is. The transformation of a worried intellectual into an effective member of a revolutionary party does not take place overnight. It is a long and sometimes a painful process. Thus nobody can say how quickly or how suddenly the Communist movement in the universities will develop. That depends on factors that are beyond anyone's control. But the foundations for a strong revolutionary movement exist, they exist in the very conditions of an ordinary student's life. It is very easy and to some people very comforting to sneer at youthful fanaticism. A movement so young as the Communist movement is inevitably at times naïve, immature, over-enthusiastic, and provides a splendid field for the peddlers of second-hand witticisms. But it is none the less a serious movement. Out of the break-up of the standards of an entire class before changing conditions of life, a compact revolutionary core is being formed—a small minority still, but

the most organised and efficient of the minorities. The changes that are going on now, often imperceptibly, but none the less steadily, will perhaps later assume a national importance that very few of the actors in the present small-scale events realise. But when the next crisis that will shake the whole system explodes, whether it is war crisis, economic crisis, or political crisis, the relatively quiet and petty developments of these pre-war, pre-crisis years will emerge in their real significance.

THE ROLE OF BRITAIN

(From 'Situation in Catalonia')

THERE is deep resentment about the attitude taken up by the British Government. Even after the fighting was over, when the Anarchist paper, *Solidaridad Obrera*, was carrying a list of British businesses not to be interfered with, the British Consulate's stories of red terror were used to frighten the British residents out of Spain. All British subjects were ordered to leave; and many small business men who could now be in possession of their establishments were frightened out of their livelihood, because their businesses were confiscated when they had not returned by 15th August. There is strong feeling against the attitude of the British Ambassador remaining at Hendaye on the rebel side of the frontier when all the other important countries were being represented by their ambassadors at Madrid. Again, Barcelona workers are asking: in the first days of the fighting, when the newspaper correspondents of all the world were on their way to Barcelona, why did the correspondent of one of the most important British papers, who should have been on the job in Barcelona, board the first train out of the country and reappear in Burgos?*

And it may be that Britain is not directly arming the rebels: but is the Government doing anything to stop

the sending of arms to Italy and Portugal? Is it true that Vickers, Tyneside, are working overtime on rush orders from these two countries? Is it true that in the early days the British second-hand market* was cleared of aeroplanes by agents who were in fact acting for these two countries? Is it true that Britain, which owns the Portuguese copper mines, banking, insurance, railways, electricity, tramways, whose fleet is allowed free access to Portuguese harbours, is doing all in its power to put pressure on its semi-colony to abandon help for the rebels? or is the diplomatic pressure countered by quiet intimations to the Portuguese Fascists that nothing effective will be done? Britain runs Portugal. It could force the Portuguese Government into line without effort—if it wanted to. But as strong as the resentment against the pseudoneutrality of the British Government is the interest taken in the activities of the British workers. The medical unit was received with enthusiasm. The Trafalgar Square meeting* had full-page photos in the illustrated papers. The work that English militiamen like Nat Cohen, whose centuria captured five machine-guns in Mallorca, or the aviator on the Madrid front who brought down a Fascist plane, is real solidarity in action whose value is understood.*

But at the same time, the T.U.C.* decision for neutrality came as a heavy blow. It is not easy for Spanish workers to understand the T.U.C. block vote. And whilst they believe that the 3,000,000—50,000 vote represents the real feeling of the English workers, they will not set much store by resolutions of solidarity. And the attitude of the leaders who still oppose neutrality is incomprehensible to them. If Citrine and the English leaders who still keep the second and third internationals apart by the threat of splitting the international had any conception of the joy and enthusiasm with which international unity—even on the one issue of Spain—would

be greeted by the workers in the factory and the militia at the front, only deliberate hostility to the Spanish workers' fight would allow them to persevere with their splitting tactics.

What is needed now is to redouble the campaign against neutrality. Money is wanted, medical stores are wanted. But above all, the fight against neutrality. We are now selling Harry Pollitt's pamphlet that deals with the stopping of the *Jolly George*. That pamphlet has a very immediate moral. If the dockers and transport workers to-day showed the same vigilance as they showed in 1920,* I have no doubt they could avert shipment of arms to Italy and Portugal—destined for the Spanish rebels. This year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of our own great general strike.* A great deal has happened since then: and I know the printing workers have a harder fight than before 1926. But if the London printers could put a stop to the lies of the Rothermere press,* it would be a gesture the Spanish workers would never forget.

But again and again, it is the fight against neutrality that is most important of all. Give the Spanish Republic the arms it has a right to, and it can win in a few months. Continue the blockade, every day and every hour can be reckoned in the lives of Spanish militiamen uselessly wasted. The Government that was beaten on the Hoare-Laval Plan has not grown any stronger in 1936. It can be beaten on this issue of far greater importance. Now more than ever it is clear that internationalism is not a question of pious resolutions; it is an international fight against an international enemy. And if on their section of this world front the English Labour Movement can fight with one-tenth of the courage and determination that the Spanish workers are every day showing, it can perhaps play a decisive part in a decisive struggle.



Poems



SAD POEM

I loved you with all that was in me, hard and blind,
Strove to possess all that my arms could bind,
Only in your loving found peace of mind.
But something is broken, something is gone,
We've loved each other too long to try to be kind,
This will turn to falseness if it goes on.

Though parting's as cruel as the surgeon's knife,
It's better than the ingrown canker, the rotten leaf.
All that I know is I have got to leave.
There's new life fighting in me to get at the air,
And I can't stop its mouth with the rags of old love.
Clean wounds are easiest to bear.

Else feel the warm response grow each night colder,
The fires of our strength in each other ash and
smoulder.
Nothing that we do can prevent that we have grown
older,
No words to say, no tears to weep,
Don't think any more, dear, rest your dark head on my
shoulder,
And try to sleep, now, try to sleep.

* * *

Should spring bring remembrance, a raw wound
smarting?
Say rather for us fine weather for hurting,
For there's no parting curse we fear.
Here we break for good with the old way of living,
For we're leaving only what wasn't worth having,
And face turned forward, for there's no life here.

Best cut out all the talk of renewing
And wordy philosophies of destroying —
Easiest far to tell them straight
We don't do this for fun, and, joking apart,
We mean what we say, and don't care if we hurt,
For there's plenty to do, and no time to wait.

Who know the future holds pain and anger
Need pay no heed to their warnings of danger;
Better to drink too deeply than not at all.
'If you move too hastily you'll regret it,
And when we were where you are, we didn't forget it.'
Exactly—and it's you that's going to fall.

Though you don't like our looks, or the way we behave,
Or the way we think, or the way we love,
You'd better realise you've made a mistake,
If you think you can shake us with the charge of
betrayal,
For we're not ashamed of being disloyal
To compulsion—contracts that we didn't make.

Now we've slipped your bandage from over our eyes,
And can see as surrender what you called compromise.
We're ready for all you thought caddish to do;
Throw pepper in the eyes of the policeman's horses,
Seduce from allegiance His Majesties forces,
And finish as victors, when you're in the zoo.

You know at what forge our purpose was steeled,
At what anvil was hammered the hammer we wield,
Who cut the sickle to a cutting edge.
And under the light of our five-point star
The faces you see here are different far
From those at the closed works, or fallen bridge.

The sky is darkening with great clouds,
And from the cold north the sullen crowds'*
Songs startle the streets of the derelict town.
'No more they're deceived by their leaders' mock strife,
In action demanding for all bread and life,
For all bread and life'—and the storm sweeps down.

Not the dreamed-of battle on the windy plain,
But light slitting the eyelids in the cold dawn.

The old world seen in a new light.
And see! the fist of the silent defender
Is clenched to strike as we gather under
Our banner, 'Students and Workers Unite!'

Now the crazy structure of the old world's reeling,
They can see with their own eyes its pitprops falling,
Whether they like it, or whether they don't.
Though they lie to themselves so as not to discover
That their game is up, that their day is over,
They can't be deaf to our shout, 'RED FRONT!'

SERGEI MIRONOVITCH KIROV

(Assassinated in Leningrad, December 1934)

Nothing is ever certain, nothing is ever
safe,
To-day is overturning yesterday's settled
good.
Everything dying keeps a hungry grip on
life.
Nothing is ever born without screaming
and blood.

Understand the weapon, understand the
wound:
What shapeless past was hammered to
action by his deeds,
Only in constant action was his constant
certainty found.
He will throw a longer shadow as time
recedes.

POEMS WRITTEN IN SPAIN

FULL MOON AT TIERZ: * BEFORE THE STORMING OF HUESCA

1

The past, a glacier, gripped the mountain wall,
And time was inches, dark was all.
But here it scales the end of the range,
The dialectic's point of change,
Crashes in light and minutes to its fall.

Time present is a cataract whose force
Breaks down the banks even at its source
And history forming in our hand's
Not plasticine but roaring sands,
Yet we must swing it to its final course.

The intersecting lines that cross both ways,
Time future, has no image in space,
Crooked as the road that we must tread,
Straight as our bullets fly ahead.
We are the future. The last fight let us face.

2

Where, in the fields by Huesca, the full moon
Throws shadows clear as daylight's, soon

The innocence of this quiet plain
Will fade in sweat and blood, in pain,
As our decisive hold is lost or won.

All round the barren hills of Aragon
Announce our testing has begun.
Here what the Seventh Congress* said,
If true, if false, is live or dead,
Speaks in the Oviedo mauser's tone.*

Three years ago Dimitrov fought alone
And we stood taller when he won.
But now the Leipzig dragon's teeth
Sprout strong and handsome against death
And here an army fights where there was one.

We studied well how to begin this fight,
Our Maurice Thorez held the light.
But now by Monte Aragon
We plunge into the dark alone,
Earth's newest planet wheeling through the
night.

3

Though Communism was my waking time,
Always before the lights of home
Shone clear and steady and full in view—
Here, if you fall, there's help for you—
Now, with my Party, I stand quite alone.

Then let my private battle with my nerves,
The fear of pain whose pain survives,
The love that tears me by the roots,
The loneliness that claws my guts,
Fuse in the welded front our fight preserves.

O be invincible as the strong sun,
Hard as the metal of my gun,
O let the mounting tempo of the train
Sweep where my footsteps slipped in vain,
October in the rhythm of its run.

4

Now the same night falls over Germany
And the impartial beauty of the stars
Lights from the unfeeling sky
Oranienburg and freedom's crooked scars.
We can do nothing to ease that pain
But prove the agony was not in vain.

England is silent under the same moon,
From Clydeside to the gutted pits of Wales.*
The innocent mask conceals that soon
Here, too, our freedom's swaying in the scales.
O understand before too late
Freedom was never held without a fight.

Freedom is an easily spoken word
But facts are stubborn things. Here, too,
Our fight's not won till the workers of all the world
in Spain

Stand by our guard on Huesca's plain
Swear that our dead fought not in vain,
Raise the red flag triumphantly
For Communism and for liberty.

A LETTER FROM ARAGON

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

We buried Ruiz in a new pine coffin,
But the shroud was too small and his washed
feet stuck out.

The stink of his corpse came through the clean
pine boards

And some of the bearers wrapped handkerchiefs
round their faces.

Death was not dignified.

We hacked a ragged grave in the unfriendly
earth

And fired a ragged volley over the grave.

You could tell from our listlessness, no one much
missed him.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

There is no poison gas and no H. E.

But when they shelled the other end of the village
And the streets were choked with dust

Women came screaming out of the crumbling
houses,

Clutched under one arm the naked rump of an
infant.

I thought: how ugly fear is.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.

Our nerves are steady; we all sleep soundly.

In the clean hospital bed my eyes were so heavy
Sleep easily blotted out one ugly picture,

A wounded militiaman moaning on a stretcher,
Now out of danger, but still crying for water,
Strong against death, but unprepared for such pain.

This on a quiet front.

But when I shook hands to leave, an Anarchist
worker

Said: 'Tell the workers of England
This was a war not of our own making,
We did not seek it.
But if ever the Fascists again rule Barcelona
It will be as a heap of ruins with us workers
beneath it.'

TO MARGOT HEINEMANN

Heart of the heartless world,
Dear heart, the thought of you
Is the pain at my side,
The shadow that chills my view.

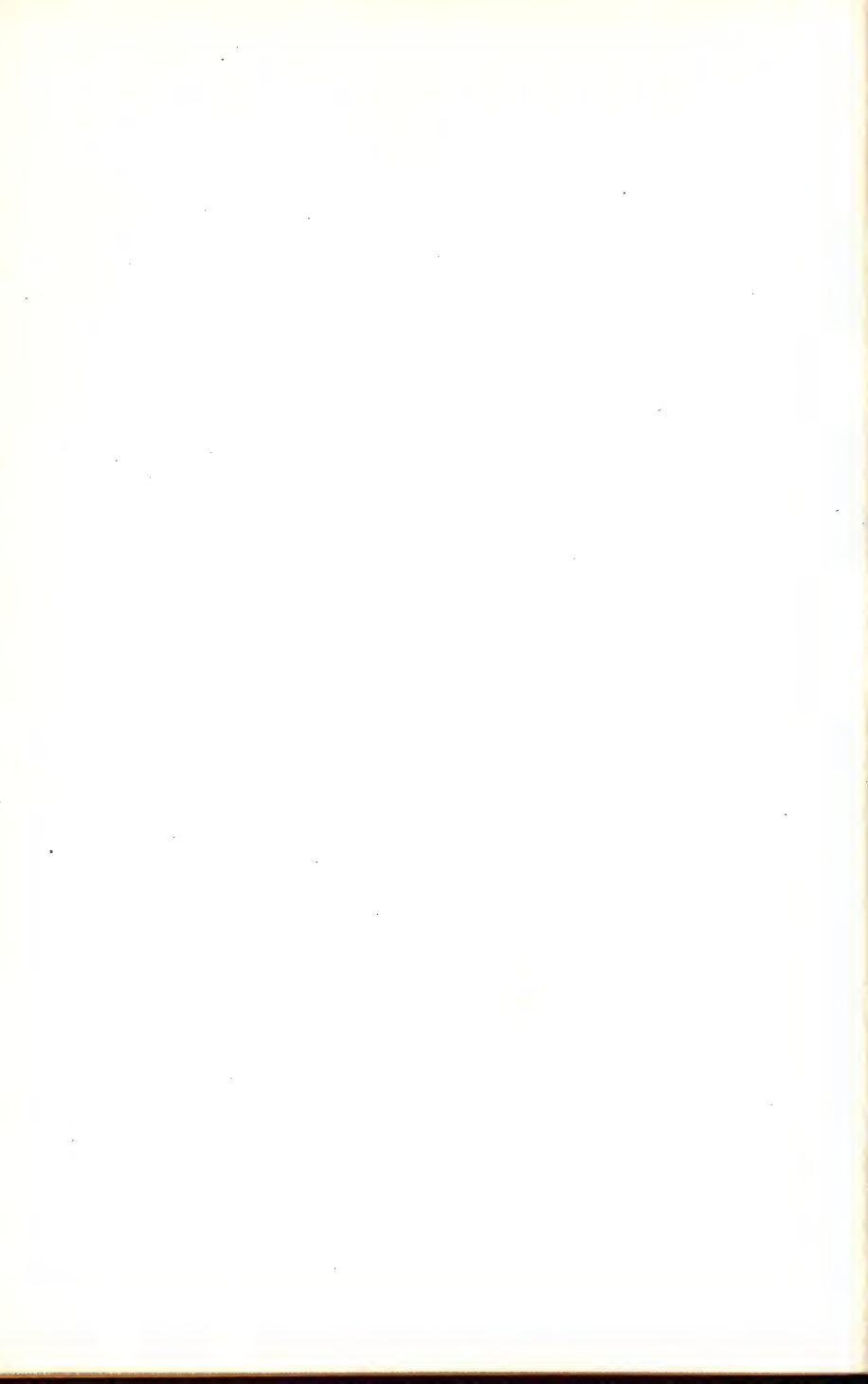
The wind rises in the evening,
Reminds that autumn is near.
I am afraid to lose you,
I am afraid of my fear.

On the last mile to Huesca,
The last fence for our pride,
Think so kindly, dear, that I
Sense you at my side.

And if bad luck should lay my strength
Into the shallow grave,
Remember all the good you can;
Don't forget my love.



I Letters



LETTER HOME

‘AT PRESENT I feel more and more strongly inclined to do English: certainly at present all my interest is there. It seems to me that the main object of doing history is for the research historian, which I certainly don’t intend to be: even if, as you think, I will end up by doing history, it will be applying new theories to the facts; I don’t think I should ever be able to narrow my interest enough to be able to spare the time to do research work. And till there is some theory I want to prove by history, there seems very little point in writing essays on the “Domestic Reforms of Charles V” and the Balance of Power in the 18th century, etc.; etc., when all my interests are elsewhere. Besides, through English I can indirectly approach psychology and the whole problem of language: and while at history I feel quite incapable of doing sensible work for a silly question—because to find anything new one has to do infinitely more research than I shall be able to—at English it is perfectly possible. That is at any rate what I feel at present. I must talk to CRS¹ about it.

‘Love,
‘John’

¹ CRS—C.R. Spenser—form master

Stowe,
1930

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

Here are your two poems. I don't like either of them as much as the previous short one: though I think that in both of them you are getting much closer than in any of your earlier poems—except a few lines now and again—to a live language. But in the first, 'as it tells the birds' grated on me at any rate unpleasantly. They seem to be utterly false to the image-structure of the poem, which is surely as important as the music of it. I wonder, how much of your poetry is shaped by tradition: are the poems that you write really your most important experiences? or has your view of poetry been so much moulded by the traditional view that the more important experiences are too repressed to occur in poem-form at all? I don't know in the least myself: but it always seems to me that you have a great deal that needs to be said more urgently but can't because of the limitations of your view of poetry—because I should guess (though I don't know) that until fairly recently you would have denied (and perhaps still do) that every subject is equally 'poetical.' It may be, of course, that I am trying to substitute another and equally narrow concept of poetry; but I think it can include all that yours could and more besides—though I think that language is fantastically limited at present, and the more psychology I read the more I am convinced in this: in short I believe in a much stricter vocabulary and a much wider range of subjects: and writing unselfconsciously on a subject enormously depends on whether anyone else has before. To say something not only new, but that will enforce in most readers, if they are to accept it, an extended definition of poetry, is almost impossible to do without some sort of flourish and defiance of the stupider reader in ad-

vance: it is there that tradition is so important, that your tradition has gone so utterly wrong.

Stowe,
1932.

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

I always think that writing about poets you always overestimate the importance of the individual in determining what he is going to write. It seems to me that every line anyone writes must be influenced by a host of fairly clear economic, political, literary factors and innumerable obscure more personal factors entirely beyond the poet's control. And therefore that the self-conscious building of a tradition is important. For instance, I remember that you once said that when you first read it, Browning's* 'blue spirt of a lighted match' seemed to you a very daring line: if it seemed daring to you, then it is pretty clear you couldn't have written a line like that yourself without being self-conscious. And since poetry ought to be written equally unselfconsciously on every conceivable attitude to every conceivable subject, the original founders of a tradition have to use such symbols and phrases and subjects deliberately and defiantly, so that their successors can write a freer type of poem after them. Thus thanks to Eliot and Graves* I think I am able to tackle a far wider range of subjects in a more direct way than you were when you were at the same stage as I am. But there are still a number of poems which I have in my head intrinsically as good as any other, which, because of the history of poetry during the last ten years, I can't and never will be able to write. And my attitude to certain subjects, if I am going to express it as a poem at all, is predetermined by what has come before: I think it was the same in every age, except perhaps the Elizabethans, who could write equally freely on everything.

Stowe,
1932

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

Last holidays you said to me that the most any poet can do is to write a few individual lines for himself in every poem and let the tradition he writes in write the rest for him (or words to that effect). For poets writing just after a revival of tradition this seems to be all right; but for poets in the decadence of a tradition it is impossible. (Could the poets of the Romantic Revival have let the tradition of Pope* and Dryden* communicate for them?) and this age seems to me just such an age of decadence of tradition. Notice that Eliot and Graves both write so carefully that hardly a line of either of them could be confused with another poet; and they have to do this because they are building a tradition.

Stowe,
Sept. 1931.

LETTER HOME

I have just been reading Tchekoff's plays, *Uncle Vanya*, *Ivanov*, *The Sea Gull*, and I am very puzzled by them. The only thing I am perfectly definite about is that they are good, but how good I don't know. I liked *Ivanov* far better than the other two, but I was very puzzled by Ivanov's suicide at the end. It seemed to me untrue to the rest of the play, though possibly true to life. But then I am at present so puzzled by them that I am perfectly ready to believe I have misunderstood them from beginning to end. In the rather bad photograph at the beginning of the book he seems to have one of the most remarkable heads I have ever seen.

Stowe,
1. 7. 32.

LETTER TO TRISTAN JONES

Your letter makes me very jealous, particularly about Sibelius.* This isn't a good term for any of us; and I envy your freedom a good deal. One good thing, however, I am learning to listen to music, and can get more out of it than ever I could before, tho' I still have to hear a thing many times before I can really enjoy it. Sibelius suits me better than any musician at present. Those 1st and 2nd Symphonies are superb—myself I think the second better, a little, than the first.

Heckstall, Philip, and I have been working (or rather they have been working and I have been talking) about the symbolism of Wagner's *Ring*.* It's good fun, and very complicated. Heckstall wants to get up a dialogue to refute W. J. Turner's suggestion that the operas should be performed without acting, simply as music.

Stowe,
1932.

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

Have you heard anything of the music of Sibelius? I find more and more that I can listen to music: I think it is largely simply a matter of practice. I get very little from anything at first hearing, but the more I listen the more I can get from it. Don't you think that what you call your failure to listen to music well is simply lack of practice? which a gramophone ought to remedy. I have been playing the Sibelius 2nd and 1st Symphonies through about 9 times each, and like them more each time. He is a very great musician.

Stowe,
26. 7. 32.

LETTER TO TRISTAN JONES

I have been listening to more and more music lately, and am beginning to work out a sort of elementary musical theory, though that depends mostly at present on the extension of an analogy from a definition of poetry I have been at work on for some time. I wish I knew a whole lot more neurology. Talking to Joe Henderson and my mother one forgets that there is anything in psychology behind dream-analysis, because it is so much more interesting than the purely mechanical reflex business; but I shall soon find it essential to learn a lot more of that if I am to know what I am talking about at all. I am beginning to see the significance of a musical general rhythm; but the effect of a tune completely baffles me. I think quite a good thing for me to do when I leave here would be for the first three months or so to learn up all the theory of music there is up to date, and all the technical side which I know nothing whatever about yet.

With luck your introductions (*to people in Moscow—Ed.*) ought to help you a good deal to see what actually is happening. I should think that if the tour only goes officially round the show places, they'd be able to tell you where you could see what was actually happening. I think the difficulty of trusting most post-war books about the USSR is that writers seldom (except statistically) contrast the present with the pre-war conditions (which must be the only fair test) but judge them by Western European standards, and decide there's a good deal more hardship than there actually is, hardship being, I suppose, purely relative to the mental conditioning of the people, at any rate up to a point.

Write an account of—at—from—Moscow if you have time; it will be amazingly interesting to find out what it really is like. How I envy you.

LETTER HOME

'I have bought myself a *Kapital* and a good deal of commentary on it, which I hope to find time to tackle this term. Also *The Communist Manifesto*, with which I was a little disappointed, though part of it was an extremely remarkable prophecy. Also a pamphlet, *Wage Labour and Capital* (only 50 pp., do buy it and read it with FMC¹ if ever you have time, as it is perfectly intelligible) which is (I think) a summary of the economic argument of *Kapital*. Most of Laski's* criticism would seem to be directed against Engels' introduction. I found nothing whatever to quarrel with in the main thesis of Marx's own section. It seems to me dishonest for men like Laski to dismiss the Marxist interpretation of history and yet proclaim Marx as a great prophet, because his wonderfully accurate prophecy is dependent on his interpretation of history. Where it seems to me that he went wrong is in applying terms like the class-struggle (which is a legitimate abbreviation of what actually happens) as the whole and simple truth. It's far more complicated than he seemed to realise. But I believe that in this, too, his limitations are important in making him intelligible.'

LETTER HOME

'I don't think of Communism as inevitable, like measles, or the war, or the present crisis, but as *necessary*. It isn't an accident that wd.² come of its own accord

¹ FMC—F. M. Cornford, his father

² wd.—would

from outside, even if no one wanted it, like crisis, war, disease. But I think it's necessary; it hasn't got to come; there's the alternative of gradually relapsing into an American anarchy, as we are doing at present—also the prospect of another war to "save" the colonies. And I don't think there's any demand for it in the people as a whole. There can be no real demand for it till people become collectively conscious of the difference industrialism has made and is making to their lives. If they had been conscious of that all along they wd. have organised industry along socialist lines from the start, and so averted the crisis. But I think that to save themselves they have got to be made conscious. During the period of English industrial monopoly there was a steady rise of wages and growth of general prosperity; and not till they've realised that even if that state of affairs—England of '90—'14—is desirable, it is absolutely unattainable, will they begin to look for a way out themselves. And there's a terrific organised conspiracy by the gutter press to persuade them to do nothing; the *Daily Mail* and the Beaverbrook press* have been saying all this year that Crisis is over, and we shall soon have prosperity over again. And we've got to fight that, not just deplore it. It's only the middle generation and the pre-war trade unionists who know the period of English monopoly and believe they can return to it who are holding back a powerful revolutionary movement over here.'

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

'I think the Hunger Marchers were really hungry. I don't think it's a sentimentalism. B. Seeböhm Rowntree calculates that the price of living for a family of 5—*without considering rates or rents*—is 31s. 8d. I don't know how much a baby costs to feed—certainly it must be more

than the 1s. it's allowed under the present Means Test;* once rents and rates have been deducted, it might be possible to buy enough food for the week: but there is still the cost of lighting and fuel, as well as occasionally doctors, unemployment insurance, etc. In Stoke some families that had been evicted erected huts out of their furniture, and stretched sheets on top. They were *fined* 10s. and told that it wasn't allowed. And the iniquity of the Means Test is that, while formerly the dole was fixed, so that wages had to be a few shillings above, or else no one would work, the new provision is that benefit shd.¹ be below the rate of wages—so that where one employer is able to enforce a wage-cut, the benefit-level in the whole district must come down. So I think they really were Hunger Marchers.

'You're right that it's impossible to be a pacifist and a Communist. The Amsterdam Congress* declared itself anti-pacifist. And I really don't see how any pacifist organisation wd. be strong enough to fight the Armament Firms, the Banks, and the Newspapers. It seems to me at present that Russia's the only country really out for disarmament—because it controls these things in its own country. I think revolution would be far less beastly than war; I quite see that in 1914 probably some sort of explosion was necessary; it needn't have taken the form it did—a business man's war. A revolution might have ended war for ever. "The war to end wars" has simply made the technique of beastliness in war a great deal more efficient—the present govt.,² out for "disarmament", spends 125,000,000 on war, where in 1914 we only spent 78,000,000. True, the purchasing power of the £ has sunk, but now the price of munitions has fallen even further—so that we're preparing for war

¹ shd.—should

² govt.—government

faster than in 1914. And exporting munitions to both China and Japan. The Labour Government hadn't the guts to fight the Armament firms and continued war preparations on the same scale, in spite of its sentimental pacifist propaganda. And that's all we've got out of the war to end wars. That's why I'm not a pacifist—however good the ideal, the absolute impossibility of attaining it without a fight.

'Love,
'John'

June, 1936.

... I'll bring a copy of Peter's poems if I remember. A.L. Morton got the right line in the *Daily Worker* actually. The poems are too much: Look, I'm a Marxist, but even so I think flowers are beautiful and I can fall in love, etc., without being in any way false. But that seems really to me like for Cézanne* to say: 'Look, I'm an impressionist but I'll paint half my pictures pre-Raphaelite* just to show you I can!' What I mean is, to be revolutionary means to approach the whole reality there is, which is different and wider than other people's, in a different way. Not just to demonstrate that you are human, although that may be, as it were, a necessary foundation stage....

I am beginning to feel more strongly than before about the theory of theory. The old concept of a working-class party was one of a small bunch of people who studied and converted people. The I.L.P. used to make its reputation in Scotland because its speakers were people who could get up and explain to a bunch of bums how crises worked, or surplus value, and make it all interesting. And it was a colossal step forward when the C.P.G.B.* began to understand the need for having a line on everything. But we've carried it too far, have become too much empiricist and simple, and I am really

alarmed about the number of people who are capable of putting the line clearly and simply, or explaining just why capitalism causes war if they're challenged, or even why the U.S.S.R. is any different, or all the simple things. The more you read about the Bolsheviki, the more it seems they *started* their contact with Marxist study circles and giving a really good training before passing on to the mass work: and that's why they had a party like they did. That's why I'm beginning to think that, for instance, the 20,000 people in the N.C.L.C.* are a thing of real importance for us to win.

London,
24.4.33

LETTER TO TRISTAN JONES

I've had to break with Elisabeth, and I should think for good. I'd seen it coming for some time back, but waited to see her to make certain. She can't lead the sort of life I do; and I neither can nor want to give it up. She's born in the wrong century; the fault for our failure isn't in ourselves so much as in the time we're living in. I tried to hope all the time that when she saw the real issues, not in terms of arguments round the fire, but among the workers, she'd feel that she'd have to come in. And I left France in a pretty inconclusive state. But when I saw the Y.C.L.* at the Young Worker Conference, I felt that the gap's too hopelessly wide. I am very sorry in one way, though I am always glad of any break with the past that reflects my own position from a new angle. If one's ready to kill and be killed for the revolution, this kind of break shouldn't make too much difference, Heil, Rot Front!

It would be interesting to see how long one would remain a Communist inside a Nazi barracks. That's the final test. I feel already I could stand any other. That one I don't know about.

London,
1933.

LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

Expect me for lunch on Saturday unless I hear from you... If I come any other time, I'll let you know in time. It may be I shall have to call off this week-end again as there's a strike situation developing in one of the tramway depots, so that I may be wanted down there. But I shall know definitely about that on Thursday. On the whole question of the relation of party work to anything else, if I am to explain the nature of the work I'm doing for the L.R.D.* it might help you to understand my position. What happened was this: after I had collected the materials for my research work, the L.R.D. wrote round to the Trade Union Branches (not Co-operatives) saying that they had a speaker on the Transport Act who was prepared to speak at branch meetings. And since I've undertaken the job, when a branch applies for a speaker on a certain date, the L.R.D. clearly can't write back to say that their speaker is on holiday and can they hold a meeting some other time! because clearly the meetings are for the benefit of the audience and not the speaker, and obviously the branch must pick its own date. Since they can't always give very long notice, it's difficult for me to fix plans any time ahead. Although this is inconvenient it's completely counterbalanced by the significance of the job for me; it's far the most important job I've ever done in my life, or, most likely, will have for another three or four years. I'm tremendously lucky to have got this job, as it ought only to go to an experienced speaker and research worker, and I must make full use of it.

If you put yourself in my position you can see why I think it's so much more important now than anything else. I have to speak to a working-class audience, usu-

ally for the most part consisting of men twice my age, on a highly complicated technical subject. I'm almost without previous experience as a speaker or as a research worker. So you can see that it needs all the power I have to make a good job of it. From my own point of view you can see how urgently I want to bring it off. And the L.R.D., to which I am responsible as its representative, is in a very precarious position, and if I let the L.R.D. down, it weakens its support among the trade unionists—on whom it depends for its financial existence.

So far I've done as well as I could expect. The first meeting I undertook I was very nervous and also shaky on my material, and I was only saved from making a mess by the fact that I had a very sympathetic audience. Luckily I retrieved my failure as a speaker by making friends with the Secretary, who invited me to attend any branch meeting I liked, which is a big privilege for a non-unionist—almost like being admitted. The second time was much better than the first. The third time I was lucky enough to be at the top of my form; the branch secretary stood me a drink beforehand, with the result that I wasn't nervous before speaking! and spoke much better than I ever have anywhere before. You'll understand how tremendously it matters for me to keep this up, and why I must put it before anything else.

4 October,
1936

LETTER TO HIS COLLEGE TUTOR

I am writing this letter to resign my scholarships, as by the time this reaches you I shall already be on the way to rejoin the unit of the Anti-Fascist Militia with which I have been fighting this summer. I am sorry I did not have time to discuss it personally.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you, and through you other Fellows of the College I have not had time to write to, for the tremendous personal kindness and interest you have always shown me, even though you must have looked with disfavour on many of my activities.

Yours sincerely,
John Cornford

DIARY LETTER FROM ARAGON

(Third Quarter of 1936)

DARLING, I'll explain why in a minute, but just at the moment I'm spending whole days at the front with nothing to do, and so I am writing you an immense letter: if it wasn't so hot here I'd try and get my ideas and impressions sorted out, but I can't, so I'm writing everything down just as it comes out. . . . First of all, a last will and testament. As you know there is a risk of being killed. Statistically not very great, but it exists all the same. First of all, why I am here? You know the political reasons. There's a subjective one as well. From the age of seventeen I was in a kind of way tied down, and envied my contemporaries a good deal their freedom to bum about. And it was partly because I felt myself for the first time independent that I came out here. But I promise this is the last time I shall leave you unnecessarily. Maybe that the Party will send me, but after this I will always be with you when I have the chance. . . .

Well, all that's said. At the moment I am on top of a hill at the front in Aragon. A complete circle of rocky mountains, covered with green scrub, very barren, with a few fields in between. Two kilometres away a village held by the enemy. A grey stone affair with a big church. The enemy are quite invisible. An occasional rifle shot. One burst of machine-gun fire. One or two aeroplanes.

The sound of our guns sometimes a long way off. And nothing else but a sun so hot that I am almost ill, can eat very little, and scarcely work at all. Nothing at all to do. We lie around all day. At night two hours on the watch—last night very fine with the lightning flickering behind Saragossa, miles away. Sleeping in the open with a single blanket on the stones—last night it rained, but just not quite enough to get through the blanket. How long we are to be here I don't know. And now comes the catch—I came up to the front and Richard was left behind. Enlisted here on the strength of my Party card. There was one little Italian comrade with some broken English. Now he's been sent off. So I'm here and the only communication I have is with the very broken French of a young Catalan volunteer.* And so I am not only utterly lonely, but also feel a bit useless. However it couldn't have been expected that everything would go perfectly as it did to here. This loneliness, and this nervous anxiety from not knowing when or how to get back, and not yet having been under fire, means that inevitably I am pretty depressed. Even thought of using my press ticket to get home, but it would be too ridiculous to come out here to fight and go back because I was a bit lonely. So I am here provisionally until the fall of Saragossa whenever that is. . . .

In the morning—it was a Sunday—before it was yet hot, the bells of the enemy village of Perdiguera sounded very slow and mournful across the distance. I don't know why, but that depressed me as much as anything ever has. However, I'm settling in now. Last night we began to make ourselves more comfortable—dug little trenches to sleep in and filled them with straw. So long as I am doing anything, however purposeless, I feel fine. It's inactivity that just eats at my nerves. But the night before last I had a dream. One of the toughest people when I was small at school was the captain of rugby,

an oaf called D—. I was in the same dormitory and terrified of him. I hadn't thought of him for years, but last night I dreamt extremely vividly about having a fight with him and holding my own, and I think that's a good omen. I don't know how long we stay on this hill, but I am beginning to settle down to it. . . .

Now a bit about the political situation. That isn't easy to get straight, particularly as I haven't yet heard anyone explain the position of the Party (and the militia here I am with are P.O.U.M.—left sectarian semi-Trotskyists). But roughly this. The popular front tactics were worked magnificently to begin with. They won the elections. And under the slogan of defence of the Republic, they enabled us to arm the workers when the Fascist revolt started. Up till then the position is quite clear. But now in Catalonia things are like this. There is a left Republican Government. But, in fact, the real power is with the workers. There are 50,000 or more armed workers in Catalonia—and in the Barcelona patrols they are organised in the following proportions: 325 C.N.T. (Anarchist), 185 E.R.C. (left Republican), but this means simply the Civil Guard and the Guardia de Asalto, the police; 145 U.G.T. (Soc.-Com.); 45 P.O.U.M. Thus the Anarchists predominate. Seventy-five per cent of industry is already socialised—and mostly worked by the Anarchists. In order to prevent a Fascist outbreak, every night splits, unpopular bosses, and known Fascists are taken for a ride. Assisted by the militia, there is a peasant war raging in the countryside and thousands of Kulaks and landlords have been killed. The Anarchists appear to be preparing to attack the Government after the fall of Saragossa. That would be disastrous. The only possible tactics for the Party are to place themselves at the head of the movement, get it under control, force recognition from the Government of the social gains of the revolution, and prevent at all

costs an attack on the Government—unless the Government actually begin to sabotage the fight against Fascism. That may be what the Party is doing. But I have a fear that it is a little too mechanical in its application of People's Front tactics. It is still concentrating too much on trying to neutralise the petty bourgeoisie—when by far the most urgent task is to win the anarchist workers, which is a special technique and very different from broad Seventh Congress phrases. But I don't really know....

In Barcelona one can understand physically what the dictatorship of the proletariat means. All the Fascist press has been taken over. The real rule is in the hands of the militia committees. There is a real terror against the Fascists. But that doesn't alter the fact that the place is free—and conscious all the time of its freedom. Everywhere in the streets are armed workers and militiamen, and sitting in the cafés which used to belong to the bourgeoisie. The huge Hotel Colon overlooking the main square is occupied by the United Socialist Party of Catalonia. Further down, in a huge block opposite the Bank of Spain, is the Anarchist headquarters. The palace of a marquis in the Rambla is a C.P. headquarters. But one does not feel the tension. The mass of the people are oblivious of the Anarchist-Government trouble brewing, and simply are enjoying their freedom. The streets are crowded all day, and there are big crowds round the radio palaces. But there is nothing at all like tension or hysteria. It's as if in London the armed workers were dominating the streets—it's obvious that they wouldn't tolerate Mosley* or people selling *Action** in the streets. And that wouldn't mean that the town wasn't free in the real sense. It is genuinely a dictatorship of the majority, supported by the overwhelming majority. Not yet in Soviet form—the elec-

tions to the committees aren't on the basis of localities or factories but representatives of organisations. That narrows the basis a bit, but not much, as a huge majority of the people are organised.

Going into action. Thank God for something to do at last. I shall fight like a Communist if not like a soldier. All my love. Salute.

John

Up till now this letter has been very miserable. For this reason. I came out with the intention of staying a few days, firing a few shots, and then coming home. Sounded fine, but you just can't do things like that. You can't play at civil war, or fight with a reservation you don't mean to get killed. It didn't take long to realise that either I was here in earnest or else I'd better clear out. I tried to avoid the dilemma. Then I felt so lonely and bad I tried to get a pass back to Barcelona. But the question was decided for me. Having joined, I am in whether I like it or not. And I like it. Yesterday we went out to attack, and the prospect of action was terribly exhilarating—hence the message on the top of the page. But in the end we went back without doing anything. But I am settling down, picking up scraps of the language and beginning to feel happy. I think I'll make a good fighter, and I'm glad to be here. And since they won't let me go, it means that I don't feel useless or in the way, as if I were I'd be sent back. So I'll probably be here two months, and I will learn a hell of a lot. There is a 70 per cent chance of getting back uninjured and 90 per cent of getting back alive; which is, on the whole, worth while—and even if it wasn't, I'd have to stay....

Altogether I've passed the worst days of mental crisis, though all the physical hardship is to come. But I think I'll bear up. I've got a kind of feeling, rather

difficult to explain, that my personality, I myself, was beginning to assert itself again. For days I've been shoved about from place to place, lost and anxious and frightened, and all that distinguished me personally from a unit in the mass obliterated—just a unit, alternately worried, home-sick, anxious, calm, hungry, sleepy, uncomfortable in turn—and all my own individuality, such strength as I have, such ability to analyse things, submerged. Now that's beginning to be different, I am beginning to adapt. Probably I'll be swept off my feet again when the first action starts. But now I, John Cornford, am beginning to emerge above the surface again and recognise myself and enjoy myself, and it feels good.

The army is a curious mixture of amateur and professional. There is practically no shouting and saluting. When somebody is told to do something, he gets up to do it all right, but not in a hurry. Officers are elected by acclamation, and obeyed. About half the troops are more or less in uniform, in blue or brown overalls and blue shirts. The rest are more or less nondescript. I myself am wearing a pair of heavy, black, corduroy trousers (expropriated from the bourgeoisie), a blue sports shirt, and that alpaca coat, rope-soled sandals, and an infinitely battered old sombrero. Luggage, a blanket, a cartridge case (held together with string) in which there is room for a spare shirt, a knife, toothbrush, bit of soap, and comb. Also a big tin mug stuck in my belt. But most are a good bit smarter than that.

What is new is the complete feeling of insecurity, new for me, but most workers have it from the day they leave school. Always in all my work before there has been the background of a secure and well-provided home, and friends that I could fall back upon in an emergency. Now that is no longer here, I stand completely on my own. And I find that rather difficult at first.

But I shall manage. Just now, for instance, I have unlimited opportunity to write. And I have plenty of things which for years I've wanted to write. But I can't get them together in my head, things aren't straight enough: all I can put down are my immediate subjective impressions, and I can't think about Birmingham or anywhere else. Oh, for the objectivity of a Nehru. I'll learn: I am learning. But it's going to be something of a testing-time.

Yesterday I watched from the tiled roof of our hut the aerial bombardment of Perdiguera. The planes circling slowly and high above; then you would see a huge cloud of dust rising, beginning to float away, and then, seconds later, the sound of the crash. The comrades with me on the roof were shouting for delight as each bomb landed. I tried to think of the thing in terms of flesh and blood and the horror of that village, but I also was delighted. Now as I write three enemy planes have passed by and out of sight, but you can hear the thud of their bombs somewhere behind our lines.

Yesterday for the first time I was under fire. This is how it all happened, and it is one of the most curious experiences of my life. I found in the evening that we were due to make a surprise attack. That same evening there had arrived at Llecinena (Lerida) a new group of Italians. We lit a fire in the backyard, and I was given a chicken to pluck. Then the leader of the group, who for days now has let the house get into an indescribably filthy mess, suddenly set to work to straighten everything out and prepared a most extraordinary meal, the first we have had with clean cutlery and a clean table-cloth. After we had finished and smoked a cigarette—by now I am getting very used to listening to conversations of which I don't understand a word—we got our things together and marched out! We were kept waiting for an hour or two in the square, and I

twice fell asleep on the pavement—for that morning I had decided that so little was happening and we were getting so much sleep at night, I wouldn't sleep any more during the day. Then after a bit we marched off. Halted on the road and again fell asleep. Even then the indiscipline of our troops struck me. Every one was whispering, and then every one would suddenly start shushing and altogether there was quite a noise. I was feeling quite good and cheerful then. After a bit we left the road, which was soft under foot and powdery with dust, and turned off into the mountains. We marched all night through the mountains, across the little, banked-up strips of field they have in Aragon, through stubble. For a while I slipped and floundered, then more or less fell into the rhythm. Then gradually it began to get light and I realised that this wasn't a night attack at all. Then far below us on the right we saw the lights of Saragossa. After that we halted for a bit, and a comrade pointed out to me Perdiguera miles below. I had no idea we had climbed so high. Then at last I understood the manoeuvre. By a night's march through the mountains we had got completely in the rear of the enemy. Sebastian, the fat Rumanian, who was more exhausted than anyone else by the climb, began to try and sing a song from the *Meistersingers*,* but I couldn't make out the tune. Then we went down. We were sorted out into groups, but almost immediately were dissolved again in the confusion. From on top of a hill—it was now about 5-6, and full day—we could see Perdiguera. Then we went down again and there was a ridge which hid it from view. Then the advance began. Our single column spread out like a fan over the parched earth of the fields, and we began to move quickly. I threw away the blanket I had carried all night for it was already hot. Then we came over the ridge in sight of the enemy, and at the same time heard an attack open up

on the other side of the village. We moved forwards and were soon crouching in the vineyards a few hundred yards from the village, and for the first time heard shots whistling overhead. It was then our total lack of discipline made itself felt. The houses of the village came quite close on the left, but on the right were hidden by a ridge and only the church tower showed. But it seemed clear to me that we should attack to the right, because there was the enemy machine-gun which was holding up our counter-attack. But no such thing. A group of us crossed the fields in front of the vineyards and crouched with good cover below an olive field, the last stretch before reaching the village. Another group dashed off to attack the houses on the left and managed to get right up to them. All this time I hadn't the faintest idea who was winning or losing. Then I began to understand the planless nature of the attack. The group I was with was recalled back to the vines. There I began to collect the completely unripe grapes in my hands and suck the juice out of them. It didn't do much to relieve thirst, but it left a clean acid taste in the mouth. Then I saw the group which had taken the houses on the left come pouring back and take shelter. All this time I had not felt the least nervousness, but that may be because so far no one had been hit. I was surprised that the kick of my mauser was so slight—I hadn't had a chance of using it before—but all the same I couldn't get it under control. All this time I couldn't see any of the enemy, and so confined myself to shooting at doors and windows. Then quite suddenly we heard the noise of enemy planes. We crouched quite still among the vines: I was together with a long Italian, Milano, a member of my group, and did what he did. Apparently the planes didn't notice us. They confined themselves to bombing the other side of Perdiguera, where we were attacking. But after the bombardment our forces were completely dispersed

—not out of cowardice, no one was in the least frightened, but simply through lack of leadership, no one had said where to go and all had taken cover in different directions. So Milano decided to retreat, and I followed him. A group of about fourteen collected, and we marched back. Presently we came to a well—a big, open, stone affair about six yards across. On top was floating a dead rat. We stopped for a drink, though Milano said we might be captured because of it. Then, as we were going back, we saw a group of men in the vines and marched back to them. But there weren't many there. I went to sleep for a few minutes in the vines, but was soon woken up and told we should retreat. We retreated to a big stone barn on a slope above the well. Resting in the barn a discussion was held. At last one comrade, a strong and intelligent-looking worker in overalls, took the initiative and introduced some kind of order. I couldn't understand the discussion, but I made out that a committee of three was being elected to take a decision on what to do. And in the end it was decided to retreat. On the way down I borrowed a mug off a comrade to go down to the well for a drink. I had a drink and several others followed. (We had been about twenty-five in all in the barn.) Then suddenly bullets began to whistle very close—zip—zip—zip. We crouched under the shadow of the stone rim of the well. Then eventually we sprinted up the fields in short bouts, bent double with the bullets all around us. After that we could retreat in peace. We marched back across the fields to the hills. My throat was utterly dry, so thirsty I could not swallow, and hungry and very weary. It was only by a desperate physical effort of the guts that I was able to move one foot after the other. The climb up the mountains was a serious affair because the heat of the sun was colossal. I placed myself behind Milano, who was a mountaineer, and followed as closely as I could the deliberate econo-

my of his footsteps. We reached the top, and in spite of the fiasco I was beginning to feel better. At least I felt equal to the others, when, before, I had felt rather like a sham soldier. And this was exactly the kind of physical endurance my body was best capable of producing—certainly I was no more weary than the others and certainly made less fuss about water. The group split into two halves, one going off after water, the other with Milano keeping up high. Nearing the top the breeze was a real relief, and we came into a pine-wood, the first proper vegetation for days. Then as we came out of the wood we saw some sheds below on the right. We went down to look for water. There was a well and a lame old man sitting by it. We hoisted the water in a leaky bucket. Just to show how thirsty I was, though the bucket was leaking rapidly I was able to fill and empty the cup ($\frac{2}{3}$ pint) five times before the bucket was empty. I noticed that the more experienced drank less. Then we went off to the barn and slept for three hours. Afterwards the old man put us on to a road, we moved slowly down, at his cripple's pace, through cypress woods, past those barren strips of climbing fields, past great slabs of marble sticking out of the hills, stopping at every well to drink. The worst was over. The rest was down hill. When we reached the first outpost we learned that five men had been killed in the frontal attack that day. Then home, past the big amphitheatre round the stagnant village pond with its green reeds, past the bare strip of earth which was a football ground, and back into Llecinenà.

One thing that will come out of this. After having seen all the mistakes in organisation, all the inefficiency, and yet the revolution is winning. I think I shall have far more confidence in my own organising ability in such a situation. There are a whole lot of things I think I could do if I understood the language. And in spite of the fact that I understand so little, I think it

will be possible to learn a good deal of military stuff—though the conditions here are so unique that there will probably be no opportunity of applying it—unless in Saragossa it is a question of street fighting.

The luckiest accident of the whole war was that which put me in touch with the German comrades. From this time on the days, which had dragged and stuck and jammed like a cart in a wet road, begin to rotate slowly and regularly like the wheels of a train just gathering steam. I think the days spent in the village alone were the hardest I have yet spent in my whole life. It was the same loneliness and isolation as the first term in a new school, without the language and without any kind of distraction of something to do. All the revolutionary enthusiasm was bled out of me. I simply counted the hours. But the Germans are a splendid lot—and incidentally have treated me with a quite extraordinary personal kindness; and at last I can live in the present, get outside of my own mind, and carry on until it is time to go back.

I was never more glad of anything in my life than the accident which threw me together with them. Four of them are ex-members of the party; one still a member. They have left because they genuinely believe the C.I.* has deserted the revolution. Partly, perhaps, it is the uprootedness of emigrants. I do not know enough of the Spanish position to argue with them successfully. But I am beginning to find out how much the Party and the International have become flesh and blood of me. Even when I can put forward no rational argument, I feel that to cut adrift from the Party is the beginning of political suicide.

By far the greatest need is for something to read. In this heat, in spite of the fact that for two days we've been doing nothing in the shade of the monastery, it's very hard to sit down and study a language. I've forced

myself to do about an hour and a half's German to-day, but only by an effort. About all one can do under these conditions is read. It isn't easy to write anything coherent or sensible.

To-day I found with interest but not surprise the distortions in the P.O.U.M. press. The fiasco of the attack on Perdiguera is presented as a punitive expedition which was a success.

Again into action for the attack on Huesca.... So far there has been no fighting in this advance, and only under an inaccurate rifle fire for a few minutes. And I am now rested and fed, and feeling happy and content. All I want is some English cigarettes, some English tea, strong (insular, but can't be helped).

Since meeting the Germans I feel like myself again, no longer lost, and revolutionary again. Before I was too lost to feel anything but lost. Now I'll fight like hell and I think I'll enjoy it. They are the finest people in some ways I've ever met. In a way they have lost everything, have been through enough to break most people, and remain strong and cheerful and humorous. If anything is revolutionary it is these comrades.

LETTERS TO MARGOT HEINEMANN

(November-December 1936)

Spain

Letter of 21st *November*.

It's a long time since I've written, but I simply haven't had the chance, as the last ten days we've been at the front just by Madrid, in the open all day. This is real war, not a military holiday like the Catalan affair. We haven't done any fighting yet: we are a group with a French machine-gun company which has been in reserve most of the time. I'm writing in the sunlight in a valley full of oaks, with one section leader twenty yards away explaining the Lewis gun to a group of French. But though we haven't yet fought, we've been having a sample of what's to come this winter. Three times heavily and accurately bombarded by artillery—and there are first-class German and Italian gunners.

But the main trouble is the cold. It freezes every night, and we sleep in the open sometimes without blankets. The trouble is that the offensive on Madrid became so hot that we were called out before our training was over, and without proper equipment. But our International Brigade has done well. Continuous fighting, heavy losses, many of them simply due to inexperience, but we've been on the whole successful.

The Fascist advance guard got very close to Madrid: but as I've always said, their main trouble is shortage of

men, and they can't make a concerted advance; they push forward in alternate sectors. And we've given the head of their advance a hell of a hammering.

I don't know what the press is saying over in England: but Madrid won't fall: if we get time to organise and to learn our guns, we shall do very well.

Now as to our personnel. Less good news. Our four best Lewis gunners were sent up with an infantry section. One is in hospital with two bullets in the guts. Steve Yates (ex-corporal in the British army, expelled and imprisoned for incitement to mutiny) is missing, believed 90 per cent, certain dead. Worst of all, Maclaurin, picked up dead on his gun after covering a retreat. He did really well. Continuously cheerful, however uncomfortable, and here that matters a hell of a lot. Well, it's useless to say how sorry we are; nothing can bring him back now. But if you meet any of his pals, tell them (and I wouldn't say it if it weren't true) he did well here, and died bloody well.*

Then worse still, our section leader, Fred Jones, he was a tough, bourgeois family, expelled from Dulwich, worked in South American Oil. Has been three years in the Guards, a hell of a good soldier, unemployed organiser, etc. Did magnificently here. Kept his head in a tough time after our captain got killed, and was promoted to section leader. Then on a night march got caught in some loose wire when a lorry passed, hurled over a bridge, and killed. We didn't see what happened: and to give some idea of the way we felt about him, after his death none dared to tell the English section for several hours. Well, we shall get along somehow. But that's a hell of a way to have your best man killed.

Bernard¹ has been doing fine. Worked terribly hard as liaison man and political delegate because of his

¹ Bernard—Bernard Knox, writer of pp. 121-130.

knowledge of French: and he hasn't much reserve of physical strength. Two nights running he fainted from the cold, but hasn't made any complaints. There's a tough time ahead, and those that get through will be a hell of a lot older. But by Christ they'll learn a lot.

There's little enough else to say. Everyone here is very tired by the cold nights, often sleepless, a bit shaken and upset by our losses, depressed. And it's affected me a bit, though I'm getting a thick skin. If I'd written a few hours ago you'd have got a different kind of letter. For five weeks I scarcely missed you, everything was so new and different, and I couldn't write but formal letters. Now I'm beginning to wake up a bit, and I'm glad as I could be that the last few days I had with you were as good as they could be. I re-read your letter to me yesterday, and I was proud as hell. And as you say there, the worst won't be too hard to stand now. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do know we're in for a tough time. And I am glad that you are behind me, glad and proud. The losses here are heavy, but there's still a big chance of getting back alive, a big majority chance. And if I didn't, we can't help that. Be happy, darling. Things here aren't easy, but I never expected them to be. And we'll get through them somehow, and I'll see you again, bless you, darling.

John

I felt very depressed when I wrote this. Now I've eaten and am for the moment in a building. I feel fine. Warm. I'll get back to you, love, don't worry. God bless you.

Letter, 8.12.36

DARLING,

There is an English comrade going back, and this is my first chance of an uncensored letter. Remember that

a good deal is not for publication. Excuse incoherence, because I'm in hospital with a slight wound and very weak. I'll tell you about that later.

I'll assume none of my letters have yet got through, as I've had no answers. First of all about myself. I'm with a small English group in the Machine Gun Company of the French Battalion of the First International Brigade. Luckily we are in the best company, the machine gunners; and in the best section of that, a Franco-Belgian section.

Now, as to the English blokes. Amongst the good blokes, Bernard, who is political delegate, replacing me because I did not speak enough French to get things done. He's been ill, and suffers terribly from the cold, but has borne up really well. John Sommerfield,* tough and starting like me with no military training, has become a good soldier, and a good scrounger which is very important in a badly equipped army. David Mackenzie, a Scots student: age 19: first-class rifle shot and machine gunner: intellectual and writes good verse. A very good guy is Edward Burke of the *Daily Worker*. Ex-actor, looks like a sap, always loses everything, but has a queer gift for understanding machinery, became a good machine gunner in no time, was put *pro tem*¹ on a trench-gun, promoted to section leader he did well on a really nasty bit of the front line.

We had about a month's training at Albacete and La-Rada. We English did badly, we were a national minority very hard to assimilate, mucked about between one station and another, starting work on one kind of gun and then having it taken away from us, taking part in manœuvres which those that didn't speak French couldn't understand. When we at last got down to work with the machine gunners our training was interrupted almost

¹ *pro tem*—pro tempore (лат.)—смотря по надобности

before we started, and we were switched through to the front. That was early in November. We were put in general reserve in the University City, thought we could rest and take it easy. The first morning we were heavily shelled with 75's. I did quite well that day. The section leader, Fred Jones, was away, and so confident that all was quiet that he hadn't appointed a successor. I took charge on the moment, was able to get all the guns—we then had four—into position, and rescued one which the gunmen had deserted in a panic. But there was no attack after all.

Then in reserve in the Casa del Campo: a big wood, ex-royal forest, rather Sussexy to look at: but behind to the right a range of the Guadarama, a real good range with snow against a very blue sky. Then a piece of real bad luck. Maclaurin and three other Lewis gunners were sent up to the front. The French infantry company they were with was surprised by the Moors. The Lewis gunners stayed to cover the retreat. Mac was found dead at his gun, Steve Yates, one of our corporals, an ex-soldier and a good bloke, was killed too. Another, wounded in the guts. It's always the best seem to get the worst.

Then for the first time up to the front. We advanced into position at exactly the wrong time, at sunset, taking over some abandoned trenches. The Fascists had the range exact and shelled us accurately. Seven were killed in a few minutes. We had a nasty night in the trenches. Then back into reserve. The main trouble now was the intense cold: and we were sleeping out without blankets, which we had left behind in order to carry more machine-gun ammunition. Worse still to come; we had to make a night march back. There was a lorry load of wounded behind us. The lorry driver signalled, but wasn't noticed and got no answer. The four lines were so indeterminate that he thought we were a Fascist column and accelerated past us. Someone put up a wire to stop the

car. The wire was swept aside, caught Fred Jones by the neck, hauled him over the parapet and killed him. Fred was a really good section leader: declassed bourgeois, ex-guardsman unemployed organiser, combination of adventurer and sincere Communist: but a really powerful person and could make his group work in a disciplined way in an army where there wasn't much discipline. That day the French redeemed their bad start by a really good bayonet attack which recaptured the philosophy building. We were in reserve for all this.

Then a spell of rest behind the lines. Back at the front in a really comfortable position in the philosophy and letters building. This was our best front line period. Comfortable, above all warm, and supplies regular. A great gutted building, with broken glass all over, and the fighting consisted of firing from behind barricades of philosophy books at the Fascists in a village below and in the Casa Velasques opposite. One day an anti-aircraft shell fell right into the room we were in. We were lucky as hell not to be wiped out completely: as it was there were only three slightly wounded, I gathering a small cut in the head. After the night in the rather inefficient but very nice Secours Rouge Hospital, where the amateur nurses wash your wounds like scrubbing the floor, I came back, feeling all right, but must have been a bit weak from loss of blood. Then came two heavy days work trench-digging in the frozen clay. The afternoon of the second day I think I killed a Fascist. Fifteen or sixteen of them were running from a bombardment. I and two Frenchmen were firing from our barricades with sights at 900:*. We got one, and both said it was I that hit him, though I couldn't be sure. If it is true, it's a fluke, and I'm not likely to do as good a shot as that again. Then back again into reserve. The first day we were there, David Mackenzie and I took a long walk towards the Guadarama. When I came back my wound

began to hurt again: this morning I was very weak, a kind of retarded shock, I think, and am now in hospital for the time being.

Well, that's how far we've got. No wars are nice, and even a revolutionary war is ugly enough. But I'm becoming a good soldier, longish endurance and a capacity for living in the present and enjoying all that can be enjoyed. There's a tough time ahead but I've plenty of strength left for it.

Well, one day the war will end—I'd give it till June or July, and then if I'm alive I'm coming back to you. I think about you often, but there's nothing I can do but say again, be happy, darling. And I'll see you again one day.

Bless you,
John.

Reminiscences

about
John Cornford



JOHN CORNFORD IN CAMBRIDGE

By Victor Kiernan

VERY soon after the autumn term of 1933 began one heard talk in progressive circles of a young freshman from London named Cornford. It was not long before I heard him make what was probably his first speech in Cambridge, at one of the Sunday Teas of the Socialist Society in a café near the Market. He was accusing the Government and the universities of a policy of cutting down entries and scholarships. He sat at one end of a long table, his right hand all the time tapping jerkily. 'Shades of opinion,' as one respectable pillar of the Society expressed it, made themselves felt on the spot: the speech was extremely uncompromising. Conservative Socialists were already shaking their heads. They felt that this new man was very young and wanted to go far too fast. Those were days of a new excitement in Cambridge politics. Another freshman had turned up from a vacation in Vienna with a revolver, under the belief that fire-arms were carried to political meetings as a matter of course. Cornford told me one day the history of his political ideas. He had begun in an anarchist spirit, thinking that all that was needed to overturn society was a surprise raid on police stations and telegraph offices. These notions he had already got beyond, but traces of them lingered in his manner and his tactics. At the end-

of-term elections the Right Wing carried on canvassing to overcome the block vote of the Left, which was being employed indiscreetly.

Cornford's first rooms were a double set which he shared with a friend over the gateway between Bishop's Hostel and New Court. There was one long room suitable to meetings, where he usually sat frowningly on the floor; it was furnished with an austerity that expressed the man, and was lit with naked electric bulbs. It was at one meeting here that I first talked to him. He wanted advice on academic matters, and asked me to a meal, but in such a nervous mutter that I could not hear, and asked him to tea instead. On the day arranged he left a hurried note to say he could not come, as 'A crisis has arisen in the town.' He came next day, and sat on a sofa for several hours eating hunks of bread-and-jam and arguing about History. He stayed so long that he missed his Hall, which he dismissed as a trifle, saying that bread-and-jam was enough in the way of food.

It was no wonder he struck Cambridge in general as 'odd.' The college magazine had a humorous description of him tramping through Great Court wrapped in portentous gloom and an antique raincoat. There was nothing in the slightest degree affected in his oddities. He would use a bread-knife to clean his finger-nails with complete naturalness, and his indifference to clothes was wholehearted. He wore a decrepit gown, from which he was always pulling loose bits, until the Proctors declared him academically nude, when I gave him an old gown of my own. But one felt that he had been a square peg at school, and did not get on easily with people. With people he knew well he could enjoy unbuttoned conversation, but with strangers he had no small talk, an indispensable currency in Cambridge; he made a laugh-

able contrast with the type of professional *charmeurs*¹ whom the Cambridge Union produces. When he determined to spend an evening 'working on the masses', as he called it, he would come into someone's rooms with a muttered apology, and stand or shuffle in a painfully awkward way for a minute or two; then he plunged without preface into an argument on politics or Marxist theory, and quickly lost his uneasiness, talking well, even aggressively.

In spite of his personal habits he was an embodiment of thoroughness and method. He would often drop in in the afternoon and ask for tea—which he insisted on drinking horribly strong—and after talking a while would pull out a new pamphlet and a determined-looking pipe and bury himself in them for half an hour, going away as abruptly as he had come. He could be interrupted with any sort of question, and had the faculty invaluable in a leader of focusing his whole mind on any problem at any moment. He never seemed tired, and conveyed an idea of enormous physical vitality that made it stimulating even to sit reading in the same room with him; although, as he astonished me by saying soon after he came up, he worked at politics for anything up to fourteen hours a day. Sitting down to lunch, he would insist on business being discussed first and generalities afterwards; before any committee meeting he had a cut-and-dried agenda. He was always pulling up Socialists, himself included, who drifted into the comfortable habit of sitting together at dinner in Hall instead of scattering themselves and using the opportunity for a little propaganda. He was intolerant of slackness or blundering, and condemned them without much thought of tact; but he was never in the least overbearing, and condemned his own mistakes more than anyone's: he was tragical-

¹ *charmeurs* (*фр.*)—обольстители

ly remorseful for forgetting to organise a collection after one successful demonstration. Looking back over political life in Cambridge one sees him everywhere—in a swirl of people and lights in Benet Street at the end of a torchlight procession: waiting on Parker's Piece with a body of followers ready to deal with an expected Fascist descent one summer when Mosley's vans were making frequent appearances; sitting in the middle of a hall at a Fascist meeting in an outlying village, like a captain amidst his troops of hecklers. After this last affair he confessed respect for the speaker, who had taken his grilling well: very reluctantly—his hatred of Fascism amounted to physical loathing, and to break up a Fascist meeting was perhaps his highest enjoyment. He made himself into a fairly effective public speaker, though he never got over his mannerisms, perpetually swaying back and forward on his feet, gesturing with a stiff right arm, and talking too fast. Towards the end of his time I walked with him to Tulliver's Café, where he was to speak in a debate, and he confessed to feeling very ill at ease.

We were inclined to put down his examination successes to a mixture of luck and brilliance; his notebooks, which I saw after his death, showed that he had worked as thoroughly for his Tripos as at politics. He could be seen on most mornings sitting concentratedly over a book in the college reading-room. He picked up technique very rapidly. Once he invited me to lunch, when he was living in a workingclass quarter of the town, to discuss his examination: he asked two questions, and then began to talk of the origin of the family. His interest in Marxist theory was, if not mature, too deep to have been swamped by his practical activity. He was fond of 'explaining the Elizabethans' in terms of the expansion of merchant capital, and of running down the Greeks, whom he found insipid: he had a cherished thesis

that the Venus of Milo was a mediæval patchwork of fragments. He bought books avidly from the Socialist Society Library, theoretical as well as directly political, and would talk like a schoolboy of 'doing contact work' on his family to raise a few pounds for this purpose. His literary tastes were his own. He professed a curious admiration for *Bussy d'Ambois*,* probably for the sake of its violent tirades, and he liked Blake. On music he was diffident, saying he had to hear a thing often to understand it—an example of his distaste for dabbling—and had not enough time. He was much struck by Sibelius' 'En Saga,' which I often played him on a gramophone. He never spoke of his own verses, and wrote prose for utility, troubling very little about niceties of style.

John Cornford was far from self-explanatory about his own life. He left vivid impressions, not easy to fit into one picture of his character. There was for instance a mixture of sensitiveness and roughness in him. He could talk in a Rabelaisian strain about scarecrow prostitutes he had seen in the East End, and his favourite terms were 'bloody' and 'bastard.' I met him on his way back to the Tripos hall for his last afternoon there in the First Part: he and a Canadian friend had been priming themselves with brandy during lunch, and were marching along singing ribald snatches, clearly fancying themselves as a pair of Wild West tough men. That evening he called on me with three pints of beer inside him and stamped up and down the room shouting, like the man in the *Beggar's Opera*,* 'I want women!' When I enquired why he didn't look for some he declared that one woman at a time was his rule—he was a 'monopoly capitalist'. In fact, it was impossible to imagine him either as a Don Juan, because he was incapable of doing anything casually, or as a romantic lover, because (as De Quincey* said of Wordsworth*) he seemed too downright and self-willed ever to humour and ogle a mistress.

He went off to a committee, where, I heard, he was just sober enough to transact business, with a terrifying stream of violent language. These fits of animal spirits were one side of his physical energy. He did everything forcefully. His idea of a game of pingpong was to bawl and bang his paddle on the table to upset his opponent, and serve when the latter wasn't looking. He enjoyed immensely Peter Lorre's film about the anarchist gang in London, on account of the salvo of gunshots with which it ended. Any conception of fighting as an 'art' was foreign to him; he knew little of boxing science or rules, he told me, but he could *hurt* an enemy, and would as soon kick him as anything else. He would certainly have been formidable, with his temper and powerful, ungraceful build, in any hand-to-hand fight. One morning I heard him discuss for two hours with some cronies the leading all-in wrestlers of Australia and America, and their points. I played chess with him only once. He threw himself into the bout with all his energy, and when I complained in a dilettante way of his unsporting eagerness to snap up my pawns, he looked up with a puzzled incomprehension that I can still see. He had an odd way of laughing, a chuckle that seemed extorted from him against his will, as though he felt the world was too serious a place to laugh in. Nobody would have dreamed of calling him 'Jack,' in spite of his, in many ways, simplicity and youthfulness. Before the end he was tired of student work, and wanted to be out in the world. A political job, he used to tell me, was the only sort he could 'tolerate'; he admitted that he had not yet enough experience to be able to organise, for example, a strike. He had his philosophy, or rather instinctive attitude, of which friends got only glimpses; not that he was secretive, but that he followed Lenin in his contempt for all useless sentiment and psychological weakness. He recalled one's ideas of what Lenin was like in other ways.

His politics, unlike those of many middle-class Socialists, were not based on humanitarianism alone. To him the movement was something that could call out and realise all his powers; it was the only atmosphere he could breathe. Once when he was in a philosophical frame of mind I asked him what single thing in the universe gave him most satisfaction, and he answered, after thinking for a minute, 'the existence of the Communist International.' One accepted such an answer from him as unvarnished truth. Another time, when I asked him whether he would not have preferred to live a century after the Revolution, in an era of peaceful construction, he said, decidedly, 'No'; and he did in fact *enjoy* finding himself in an epoch of storm and stress, oppression and revolt, tyranny and heroism. There was nothing of sacrificing self to duty. Of all his qualities this was perhaps the most fundamental; and the most profoundly impressive to Socialist intellectuals, most of whom are prone to ask themselves whether they *like* their political work and usually consider that they do not. Cornford was not at all a conscious ascetic. He liked eating and drinking; he had, however, no conventional needs, and in dingy lodgings in Cambridge or in Guildford Street he felt quite at home and looked quite in place. A colleague of Lenin's tells how, when he first came to London, Lenin showed him round the town, and pointed out Westminster Abbey as one of 'their' chief buildings—'they' being the bourgeoisie. Cornford had the same sense of absolute separation from the 'enemy,' of irreconcilable antagonism and difference. The barricade was his most real symbol. For him, 'they' were not merely oppressive, they were empty; they forced every one else to live wretchedly in order to maintain a manner of life which did not even make themselves happy. For him, also, the Revolution was as unquestionable a certainty as the Resurrection to a Christian. He visualised the bourgeoisie as

fully aware of the fact, and shaking in their shoes (he used a coarser metaphor). His animal vitality compared with equally real reflectiveness made one take seriously things he said which would have sounded artificial in most other mouths, and one never thought of his age except with incredulity. I recall his telling, with genuine relish, a story of Bela Kun* machine-gunning five thousand prisoners during a forced retreat in the Russian Civil War: he told it not in a spirit of sadism, but of appreciation of an act of political necessity firmly carried out. I also recall his saying one day, when he had been reading of torture of political prisoners abroad, that he knew he could rely on his will-power as regards fighting, but was not sure how well he would be able to resist physical pain. There was no self-delusion.

His mind had often run on civil wars before he took part in one. He believed—the miscalculation has an ironical sound—that the Right would not be able to use aeroplanes, for fear of bombing their own buildings. The Asturian revolt of summer 1934 stirred him, and when term began and I and two others were setting off with him for an evening's street-chalking* (an occupation he enjoyed, as it brought him within powder-smell of the police), he had ready a detailed critique of the rising and the reasons of its failure. I don't remember where I saw him last; but I remember his talking one night of the futility of conventional existence, and saying: '*I am learning to live by living.*' What he learned was to die. But none of those who knew him at all well in those years would fail to realise that among the most vital impressions of their own process of living was their contact with John Cornford.

JOHN CORNFORD IN SPAIN

By Bernard Knox

It was in late September that I saw John for the first time since his return from the Aragon front. He had come back with an idea and a purpose—an idea that was being realised, though we did not know it at the time, all over Europe. His few weeks of fighting on the Aragon front had convinced him that the untrained Spanish volunteers needed, almost as badly as they needed arms, an example of discipline and cohesion that could best be given them by small units of foreign volunteers fighting in their ranks.

A few days later seven of us boarded the night-train for Paris, equipped with large new boots and khaki overalls carried in our rucksacks. On John's advice we had taken books.... 'The worst thing about this war,' he had told us, 'is not discomfort, nor even danger, but boredom.' He had taken Volume I of *Capital* and the *Tragedies* of Shakespeare; books that were to be much in demand both during the long days of training at Albacete* and during the dull days in the shattered carcass of 'Philosophy and Letters.'*

Our first day in Paris showed us that we were a very small part of something much bigger than we had imagined. Jahn's scheme for a small but well-disciplined (and well-shaven) English unit attached to a militia col-

umn was lost and forgotten in the welter of languages and nationalities that we found in the little hotel that we were sent to. There were German exiles, many with the mark of the concentration-camp on them, Polish miners and peasants, Italians, Frenchmen, Hungarians, Greeks, all of them kicking their heels in the café, waiting for the word that would send them South. We were glad that we were part of so great an adventure, sorry that we were so few.

On the train down to Marseilles we made many friends—and many more on the boat, a heavily loaded passenger steamer that ran us into Alicante harbour on the morning of the third day. We made a triumphal march through the town, ate our way through a loaf and a tin of sardines per man, and entrained that evening for Albacete. At every station along the line the train was stopped by a welcoming demonstration, bringing wine and grapes and carrying the banner of the Communist Party. I could see John's eyes shine as he looked at those banners. This was the first evidence he had seen of the strength of his party on Spanish soil. Not that John was an Anarchist-hater. To those who shook their heads forebodingly at the influence and power of the Anarchists he would say, with only the ghost of a smile on his lips, 'I think the Fascists are more dangerous.'

We arrived at Albacete late that night, and in the morning began the process of organisation. In the immense sifting process which went on during the next few days it was only natural that so small a group as ours should be overlooked. We appointed John political delegate to urge our demands and to keep up the morale of the group—which was no light matter. We were impatient to get to the front, to get arms, to be trained and all that happened was that we were at last officially attached to the French battalion which regarded us

quite frankly as a nuisance, because of the difficulty of having every order translated on the spot. Through all this John struggled, in spite of his difficulty with the French language, to get us properly attached and organised. I remember a speech he made at a meeting of political delegates (I was there as his dictionary) which he brought out slowly and with an air of immense concentration, reinforcing each word with an emphatic downward movement of his right hand. The French he spoke was, I think, quite the vilest and most comic that I have ever heard, but not one of the listening delegates had a smile on his face. When he had finished the Political Commissar of the battalion rose and said that he had made a note of the points at issue and would get them settled.

Meanwhile our numbers had risen to twenty-one, and among the new-comers were many old and experienced soldiers. We had always thought of John as our leader and had expected to go to the front under his command. But John himself raised the question of the military command of our group and proposed as commander a comrade Jones who was an ex-Guardsman and had the added advantage of speaking good French. He told me afterwards with a grin, 'I think I could handle our little lot, but I don't fancy ordering old soldiers about.' But the time was to come when he did take command of the group and carry it successfully through a disastrous retreat.

Meanwhile the days of training rolled on and the brigade began to look like a military unit at last. We marched in step now (a sight which aroused delighted murmurs on the streets of Albacete—it was the first time they had ever seen it), and everyone was equipped with a large black beret; the beginning of a uniform that, for most of us, was never to materialise. But in our English group tempers were still frayed. Most of us could not

speak anything but English and there was nothing to read. Worst grievance of all: we had been here for weeks and not seen a rifle. Though John had surrendered the duties of political delegate to me, because I could speak better French, it was on him that fell the responsibility for maintaining discipline and harmony in the group. So great was the political experience and integrity that he brought to this task that, before we left for Madrid, hardened old soldiers had come to respect his judgment and seek his advice.

It was on the long lorry journey up to Madrid that we had our first chance to put into practice John's philosophical attitude to the discomforts of war. 'This is a peculiar kind of a war,' he used to say, 'and there's more unnecessary discomfort caused by carelessness and disorganisation than a man can bear, if he takes it seriously. The only thing to do is to laugh at it. If you look at it long enough it seems funny.' This journey up to Madrid, in open lorries and the night-cold of the Spanish highlands, aggravated by a perpetual gnawing sense of danger, was a hard test of such a philosophy, and I, for one, failed signally in its application. But I was to learn; and I think that there were times when the way we learned to see the funny side of a hopeless situation was the only thing that kept us alive and sane.

Our baptism of fire was sharp and unexpected. We were scattered with our machine-guns along a crest which we had every reason to believe was as safe as anything could be in the Madrid area (which wasn't very safe), when we heard our first shell. Nobody minded much, because it burst a good forty yards behind us, but the next two or three showed us that they were feeling for the crest we were occupying. They got it, and then the barrage started. I remember shouting to John that we ought to go over the crest into the valley, but I don't think he heard me. A few minutes later it became

apparent that nothing could remain on that crest and live, so everybody went over, pell-mell. When we sorted ourselves out down below I found that John had taken command of two machine-gun crews and brought them over with guns and ammunition complete. Our commander had gone up to advanced positions that night with one of our gun-crews, so John took over command that morning, inspecting the positions we had taken up, and criticising ruefully the way in which most of us came down the cliff. But it was not a bad performance for raw troops taken by surprise in a barrage.

Our first experience of open warfare (as distinct from the dull business of holding on at all costs in the University) was a great flanking attack on the Fascist lines at Aravaca. I remember it well because after we had been withdrawn to rest-positions after a gruelling day and night in a trench captured from the Fascists (their gunners naturally knew the range to an inch), John was the first to go up again and volunteer as an extra stretcher-bearer, to bring in the badly mangled Poles who were attacking over half a mile of completely open country under accurate shrapnel fire.

Aravaca was a costly failure—the only apparent result was the loss of the University to the Fascists in our absence. We were withdrawn immediately to retake it. And with its capture began a period when we were as happy as I think men can possibly be in the front line of a modern war. We were under cover from the deadly cold that so far had been our worst enemy, we had leisure to talk and smoke in physical comfort, and, greatest pleasure of all, it was safe to take our boots off at night. The only drawbacks to this battle paradise were the fact that we were a perfect target for artillery, and the realisation that we might be completely cut off at any moment. Here we discussed art and literature, life and death and Marxism during the long day, and as the evening

drew on, we sang. Nothing delighted John more than the sort of crude community singing that is common to undergraduate parties and public bars alike. I remember the singing particularly, because my voice, bad as it is, was the only voice among us capable of holding the song fast to the proper tune. With John Sommerfield we formed a famous trio, and our version of *She was Poor but She was Honest* was a thing to bring solicitous political delegates down many dark corridors to find out what was the matter.

It was here that John got his first wound. We had just discovered the library, intact in the basement, and had staggered upstairs with armfuls of *Everyman Library*. John had opened tentatively *The Cloister and the Hearth** and after half an hour's silence looked up to remark that Charles Reade was a good historian. My reply never left my lips. There was a crash which seemed to rip my head open and I was thrown on to the floor. When I looked up, the room was full of filthy black smoke and John was stumbling past me, his face bloody. I ran to the door and the cry 'Stretcherbearers' echoed down the four flights of stairs. John and two others were taken off to hospital at dusk; when we cleaned the room up afterwards we found a three-foot hole in the wall and hundreds of shrapnel bullets on the floor and in the walls. The great joke was still to come. The artillery expert who examined the bits identified it as one of our own anti-aircraft shells.

John returned next day, with a bandage round the top of his head and duly roared with laughter when told the joke. We had known he would, but we wanted to see. We were worried that he should have returned so soon, but he insisted that there was nothing seriously wrong with him. It was bad enough, however, to prevent him wearing a steel helmet, the white head-dress made him look more like a Moor than ever.

When we left the University at last, we headed for our first real rest. And here the English group, now reduced to twelve, had to face problems of re-organisation. The comrade who had been elected to the command after Freddie Jones' death was in a very embarrassing position because he did not understand French. He wished to resign the command, and at the same time the company commander was insisting that we choose a commander who spoke French. We were going to take the offensive again, he said, and liaison would not be so easy as it was in the University buildings. The unanimous choice fell on John (it was typical of him that his French had made tremendous strides since the Albacete days), and he made a short speech which was a masterpiece of tact and constructive criticism. We had with us a comrade Jock Cunningham,* a magnificent soldier and a man marked out for a commanding position. I had said, and John emphasised my words, that although it was impossible to elect Comrade Cunningham to the command of our group at this juncture, because of the language difficulty, we were certain that the moment we secured our transfer to the English battalion (which was being formed, at last, in Albacete), Jock would earn himself a position of high responsibility. There is no need for me to point out how right we were.

And so it was under John's command that we went up to face the biggest offensive the Fascists had yet launched—the December attack on the Escorial road. We slept luxuriously that night in what was left of the church of Boadilla del Monte, and in the morning rain we went out to take up positions. Our section, Number One (Lewis) gun; (Number Two was a Maxim), set itself up in a barn, and all day we watched our infantry counter-attack up the hills, to be driven down in the afternoon under a withering fire. 'Now we're for it,' said

Jock, as he watched them come back, 'they'll attack tomorrow at dawn.' And so they did. The storm burst as John was taking us up to relieve a Spanish machine-gun post. We found ourselves under fire from the heights where we were meant to relieve, and a few minutes later, as we squeezed and strained ourselves into the earth, the remains of our front line came crawling back, pointing up and shouting excitedly, 'Los fascistas, los fascistas.' As if we didn't know. There was nothing for it but to go back and hold a line in front of the village. So back we went, and how we covered that four hundred yards I shall never know. One of us, I think it was David Mackenzie, was repeating slowly to himself, 'Even when you have to retreat, do not run.' And so we walked, dragging the guns over the ploughed land that crumbled as the bullets hit it.

For the rest of the morning we held the road to the village, firing at close range into lines of attackers that were crossing our line of fire to outflank us. The most disturbing feature of the situation was the withdrawal of the infantry companies on our right and left flanks. Jock Cunningham, commanding Number Two gun, came down to join us and reported two men killed. John ordered the rest of the crew down from its exposed position on the crest of the road, and so we were all together again. Things looked pretty desperate. So far as I could see, our two English machine-guns (one of them badly jammed), were the only thing between Boadilla and the Fascists. But it was obviously our job to cover the retreat and not a man murmured when John announced that we were to hold on. Meanwhile the aeroplanes came over and added to the confusion. We were getting at last to the stage where we could cease worrying and laugh. We sighted four Fascist tanks coming up the road towards us, and just at that moment big shells began to fall on the village just behind us. The sight of this con-

concentrated destruction being hurled on twelve men and one Lewis-gun was too much for me. I turned to John and we burst out laughing.

It soon became apparent that they were not going to attack us. There was no sense in staying to be outflanked and captured, so I went into the village to report. I found the whole battalion preparing to evacuate, and at last found the machine-gun commander. 'Where have you come from?' he said. I explained. 'Bordel de Dieu! are you still out there? Tell Cornford to retire on the village.' That was all I got from him, but I could see he was proud of his machine-gunners. He had reason to be. When night fell, there were only a third of them left. So back we came and as we came back I got a bullet through the neck and right shoulder. There was a hurried consultation and I heard David, a medical student, say, 'I can't do anything with that.' John leaned over me. 'We can't do anything for you. Good luck, and God bless you, Bernard.' And they moved off again to fire off a couple more drums before leaving the village.

Some time later, I don't know how long, I got up and started to walk back. I was under fire but too weak to dodge, so I just walked straight back. Towards evening a munition lorry gave me a lift, and in the dressing-station I found Jan with a bullet high up in the leg. 'How the hell did you get back with that one?' I asked. I had seen men with leg wounds all the way along, hoping that one of the company's four stretcher teams would find them, and ready to shoot themselves if the Fascists came first. 'John and another man carried me,' he said. 'He'd have carried you if he hadn't thought you were done for.'

But I was to see him again, once. The poor remnant of our famous 'section anglaise' was at last transferred to Albacete, and on the way there, John came to see me in the Madrid hospital where I lay cursing and wishing

I had stayed in Boadilla. He was in fine fettle and had just handed in to headquarters a long report on the Boadilla battle, with recommendations for future engagements. I was in the frightful state of depression that sets in after the exhilaration of still being alive after two days of waiting for a hæmorrhage, and was nearly crying at the thought of not being able to shoulder a gun again. 'Never mind, Bernard,' he grinned, 'we'll make you an officer, and you can carry a little revolver on condition you never fire it.' A few minutes later he was gone, and I never saw him again.

But I heard of him. The machine-gun officer, who came to see me later told me that, in the desperate defence that followed the evacuation of Boadilla del Monte, John's crew had set an example of discipline, tenacity and courage that went far towards saving the day.

But it was not until I got to Albacete convalescent hospital that I heard of his death. I spoke to some English wounded who had been fighting in the south, on the Cordoba front. They told me how they had been joined, the night before they left, by some veterans from Madrid. 'Was one of them called Cornford?'—'Yes, he's dead. A machine-gun got him.' But I didn't want to hear any more. John had always been so gloriously alive, so smiling and confident, that I for one, had come to look on him as immortal. I didn't want to hear any details then, I got them later. And I also got, from an Irishman, an old war-veteran, who had been with him in the south, an epitaph that John would have been proud of: 'He was a lovely soldier.'

КОММЕНТАРИЙ



ESSAYS

NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AT CAMBRIDGE

К стр. 20

* Maitland Samuel Roffey — Мейтленд, Самюэль Роффи (1792—1866), английский буржуазный историк

* Magna Carta — Великая Хартия Вольностей, была дарована английским королем в 1215 году крупным феодалам и закрепляла их вольности

к стр. 22

* Bosanquet, Bernard — Бозанкет, Бернард (1848 — 1923) — английский философ и историк, представитель «объективного идеализма» в историографии

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN WESTERN EUROPE

к стр. 25

* Vickers, Schneider-Creuzot, Skoda, Krupp, and Bofors — монополистические объединения, производившие, в основном, оружие

к стр. 26

* General Economic Council — Генеральный Экономический Совет, созданный в гитлеровской Германии из представителей «большого бизнеса»

к стр. 27

* Brüning, von Papen, Schleicher — Брюнинг, фон Папен, Шлейхер — реакционные немецкие политические деятели, занимали посты в кабинетах министров в конце 20-х, начале 30-х годов

* Hindenburg — Гинденбург, Пауль фон (1847—1934) — германский фельдмаршал, президент Германии в 1925—34 гг. В 1933 г. способствовал приходу фашистов к власти.

* Weimar constitution — Веймарская конституция Германии, действовавшая в 1919—33.

к стр. 29

* Friedrich Adler — Фридрих Адлер (р. 1879) — лидер австрийских правых социалистов. Был одним из организаторов II Интернационала.

* Largo Caballero — Ларго Кабальеро (1869—1946) — один из лидеров испанских социалистов.

* Citrine — Ситрин, Уолтер (1887) — один из правых лидеров английских тред-юнионов в 30-е годы

* Henderson — Гендерсон, Артур (1863—1935) — один из лидеров реакционного крыла английской лейбористской партии

к стр. 30

* while the 'Lefts', Cripps and Cole, tell the workers of the wonderful things they will do when they come to power — «левые» лейбористы Криппс и Коул выступили после поражения лейбористской партии на выборах в 1931 году с новыми планами социалистических мероприятий в Англии, которые лишь на словах отличались от прежней оппортунистической программы их партии

* National Government — «Национальное правительство» (1931—35), состояло из консерваторов и правых лейбористов, проводило реакционную внутреннюю и внешнюю политику.

* I. L. P. — Independent Labour Party — Независимая Рабочая Партия, образована в 1893 г. С самого начала НРП была реформистской партией. Позже выродилась в узкую фракционную группу.

к стр. 32

* C. P. — Communist Party

к стр. 33

* *Stavisky scandal* (1934) — имеется в виду разоблачение афериста-белогвардейца Стависского, организовавшего массовый подкуп французских политических деятелей в целях спекуляции ценными бумагами

к стр. 34

* Dollfuss — Дольфус, Энгельберт (1829—1934) — австрийский реакционный государственный деятель, один из лидеров фашистско-католической «христианско-социальной партии»

* Действуя по фашистскому образцу, Дольфус распустил парламент и отменил буржуазно-демократические свободы.

к стр. 35

* *Heimwehr* — Хеймвер, военно-фашистская организация в Австрии, существовала до 1945 г.

к стр. 37

* *Hamburg rebellion* — вооруженное восстание гамбургских рабочих в 1923 году

* *street-fighting in Chapei* — Чапей — промышленный район Шанхая. В 1927 году здесь шли ожесточенные бои между революционной рабочей гвардией и войсками гоминдана.

LEFT?

к стр. 39

* W. H. Auden, Charles Madge, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Richard Goodman, H. V. Kemp — английские поэты, представители т. н. оксфордской школы. Выступив как «попутчики» прогрессивного антифашистского движения, в конце 30-х годов многие из них заняли резко антидемократическую позицию.

* Eliot — Элиот, Т. С. (р. 1888) — один из представителей современной английской декадентской литературы

* Joyce — Джойс, Джеймс (1882—1941) — писатель-декадент, автор известного романа «Улисс» (1922), написанного в манере «потока сознания»

* Pound — Паунд, Эзра (р. 1885) — один из наиболее характерных представителей декадентства в современной литера-

туре. Сотрудничал с итальянскими фашистами в годы второй мировой войны.

* artist's impartiality — эд. «надпартийность» художника
к стр. 42

* Lawrence — Лоуренс, Дэвид (1885—1930) — английский писатель-декадент

к стр. 43

* Jimmy Thomas — Томас — правый лейборист. Способствовал поражению Всеобщей забастовки 1926 года. С 1931 г. член консервативной партии.

к стр. 46

* Имеется в виду бурный расцвет английской драмы в конце XVI начале XVII веков. Ее крупнейшим представителем был Шекспир.

COMMUNISM IN THE UNIVERSITIES

к стр. 47

* Имеется в виду движение, вызванное происходившей в 1933 году среди оксфордских студентов дискуссией на тему «Король и государство».

* 11th November — 11 ноября, 1918 г. — день окончания первой мировой войны

* Hunger Marchers — в годы кризиса (1929—33 г.) безработные организовывали «голодные походы» в Лондон и другие промышленные центры

к стр. 48

* Hoare-Laval plan — в декабре 1935 г. министр иностранных дел Великобритании Хор и премьер-министр Франции Лаваль подписали соглашение, позволившее Муссолини завершить захват Эфиопии

к стр. 50

* people with Firsts — люди с дипломами первой степени

* 1935-36 'boom' — экономический подъем в середине 30-х годов в Англии был вызван прежде всего милитаризацией экономики

к стр. 52

* Gide, André — Жид, Андре (1869—1951) — французский реакционный писатель-декадент. В начале 30-х годов маскировался под прогрессивного деятеля, в годы второй мировой войны сотрудничал с гитлеровскими фашистами. Неоднократно выступал с клеветой на СССР.

* Forster, E. M. — Форстер, Е. М. (р. 1879) — английский писатель, автор известной книги «Поездка в Индию» (1924), обличающей британских колонизаторов в Индии. Впоследствии отошел от художественного творчества.

* Malraux, André — Мальро, Андре (р. 1901) — французский писатель, в 30-ые годы выступил с рядом антифашистских произведений; после войны защищает в своем творчестве принципы «искусства для искусства».

к стр. 53

* Owen, Wilfrid — Оуэн, Уилфрид (1893—1918) — английский поэт, творчество которого проникнуто антивоенными мотивами. Погиб на фронте первой мировой войны.

* Brooke, Rupert — Брук, Руперт (1887—1915) — английский поэт, представитель группы писателей, т. н. «георгианцев», воспевавших в романтико-идиллических тонах природу и повседневный быт Викторианской Англии

к стр. 54

the Webbs — супруги Вебб, Беатриса (1858—1943) и Сидней (1859—1947), известные английские общественные деятели. Посетив в 1932 году Советский Союз, выпустили книгу «Советский коммунизм — новая цивилизация», высоко оценивающую успехи социалистического строительства в нашей стране, и вызвавшую яростные нападки как консервативной, так и лейбористской прессы.

THE ROLE OF BRITAIN

к стр. 57

* Burgos — город в Испании, один из центров фашистского мятежа

к стр. 58

* second-hand market — эд. черный рынок

* the Trafalgar Square meeting — митинг на одной из крупнейших площадей Лондона. Был организован в поддержку республиканской Испании.

* Имеются в виду боевые действия английских добровольцев.

* T. U. C. — Trade Union Council — Совет тред-юнионов, находился в руках правых лейбористов

к стр. 59

* If the dockers and transport workers today showed the same vigilance as they showed in 1920 — имеется в виду мощное движение английских рабочих в 1920 году под лозунгом «Руки прочь от России». Трудящиеся Англии выступали тогда за немедленное прекращение интервенции Антанты против молодой Советской республики.

* general strike — Всеобщая забастовка 1926 года была крупнейшим выступлением английского пролетариата. Потерпела поражение в результате предательства правого руководства тред-юнионов.

* But if the London printers could put a stop to the lies of the Rothermere press — Всеобщая забастовка 1926 года началась с того, что рабочие типографии отказались набирать номер буржуазной газеты "Daily Mail", составленный в погромном духе и призывавший к расправе над трудящимися.

* Rothermere press — реакционный газетный концерн Ротермира

POEMS

к стр. 66

* And from the cold North the sullen crowds ... — во время «голодных походов» рабочие колонны шли с севера на юг, в Лондон

к стр. 68

* Tierz — деревня в 5 км от Уэски, опорного центра мятежников на Арагонском фронте

к стр. 69

* the Seventh Congress — VII Конгресс Коминтерна (1935) сыграл большую роль в деле сплочения широких масс трудящихся и всех демократических сил на борьбу с фашизмом

* Speaks in the Oviedo mauser's tone — в Овьедо, центре провинции Астурии, долгое время шли уличные бои между осажденными мятежниками и астурийскими горняками

к стр. 70

* From Clydeside to the gutted pits of Wales — судостроители Клайда и уэльские горняки являются авангардом английского рабочего класса

LETTERS

к стр. 79

* Browning — Браунинг, Роберт (1812—1889) — английский поэт, выступал в жанре т. н. «драматических монологов»

* Graves — Грейвз, Роберт (р. 1895) — английский поэт-декадент

к стр. 80

* Pope — Поп, Александр (1688—1744) — английский поэт и драматург, виднейший представитель классицизма

* Dryden — Драйден, Джон (1631—1700) — английский поэт и драматург, видный представитель классицизма

к стр. 81

* Sibelius — Сибелиус, Ян (1865—1957) — выдающийся финский композитор, основоположник национальной музыкальной школы

* Wagner's Ring — имеется в виду крупнейшее музыкально-драматическое произведение Вагнера «Кольцо Нибелунга»

к стр. 83

* Laski — Ласки, Гарольд (1893—1950) — политический деятель, один из лидеров и теоретиков лейбористской партии; был проповедником т. н. «демократического социализма», являющего-

ся идеологическим орудием английской буржуазии в ее борьбе против социализма

к стр. 84

* Beaverbrook press — газетный концерн лорда Бивербрука

к стр. 85

* Means Test — «проверка нуждаемости», оскорбительное для чувства человеческого достоинства англичан мероприятие, осуществленное в годы кризиса английским правительством с целью урезать и без того мизерные пособия по безработице

* Amsterdam Congress — Амстердамский антивоенный конгресс 1932 года, положил начало широкому движению трудящихся против опасности новой войны

к стр. 86

* Cézanne — Сезанн, Поль (1839—1906) — французский живописец, импрессионист

* pre-Raphaelite — прерафаэлиты — группировка английских художников и писателей, возникшая в середине 19 века. Своим идеалом они провозгласили итальянское искусство до Рафаэля, которое воспринималось ими как высшее достижение средневековья.

* C. P. G. B. — Communist Party of Great Britain

к стр. 87

* N. C. L. C. — National Council of Labour Cooperatives

* Y. C. L. — Young Communist League

к стр. 88

* L. R. D. — Labour Research Department

DIARY LETTER FROM ARACON

к стр. 92

* Catalon volunteer — Каталония пользовалась автономией в рамках Испанской республики. В республиканской армии сражались отдельные подразделения каталонцев.

к стр. 94

* Mosley — Мосли, Освальд (р. 1896) — главарь английских фашистов

* Action — фашистский листок

к стр. 98

* Meistersingers — опера Вагнера «Нюрнбергские Мейстерзингеры»

LETTERS TO MARGOT HEINEMANN

к стр. 105

* died bloody well — зд. умер как герой

к стр. 107

* John Sommerfield — Джон Sommerфилд (р. 1904) — английский прогрессивный писатель, автор книги «Доброволец в Испании», посвященной Корнфорду

к стр. 109

* with sights at 900 — с прицелом, установленным на 900 метров

REMINISCENCES ABOUT JOHN CORNFORD

CORNFORD IN CAMBRIDGE

к стр. 117

* Bussy d'Ambois — «Бюсси д'Амбуа» — политическая трагедия английского драматурга Джорджа Чапмена (1559—1634). В ней Чапмен обличает королевский произвол и деспотизм, нападая на самые основы абсолютизма.

* Beggar's Opera — «Комическая опера», написана английским писателем Д. Геем (1685—1732)

* De Quincey — Де Квинси, Томас (1785—1859) — английский писатель, реакционный романтик

* Wordsworth — Вордсворт, Вильям (1770—1850) — английский поэт, представитель реакционного романтизма

к стр. 120

* Bela Kun — Бела Кун — видный деятель венгерского революционного движения, участник венгерской революции 1919 года и гражданской войны в России

* street-chalking — написание мелом на тротуарах и стенах домов лозунгов или призывов в знак протеста против чего-либо

CORNFORD IN SPAIN

к стр. 121

* Albacete — Альбасете — город в юго-восточной Испании. Там проходило формирование частей Интернациональной бригады.

* Philosophy and Letters — название квартала Университетского городка в Мадриде. В годы войны через Университетский городок проходила линия фронта.

к стр. 126

* "The Cloister and the Hearth" — «Монастырь и семейный очаг» — роман английского писателя Чарльза Рида (1814—1884)

к стр. 127

* Jock Cunningham — Джок Кэннингхэм — английский коммунист, участник войны в Испании



ДЖОН КОРНФОРД
КОММУНИЗМ—МОЕ ПРОБУЖДЕНИЕ

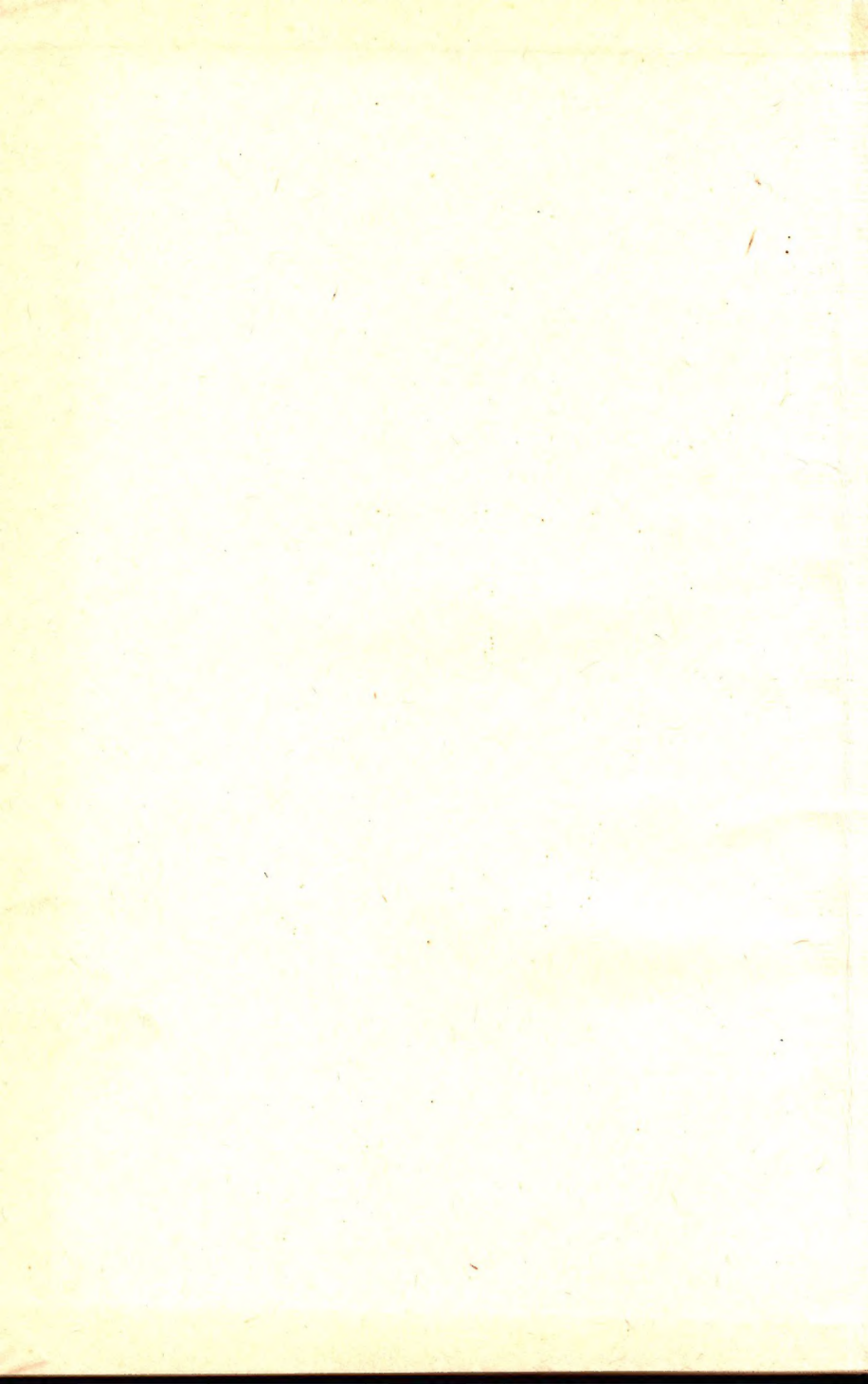
На английском языке

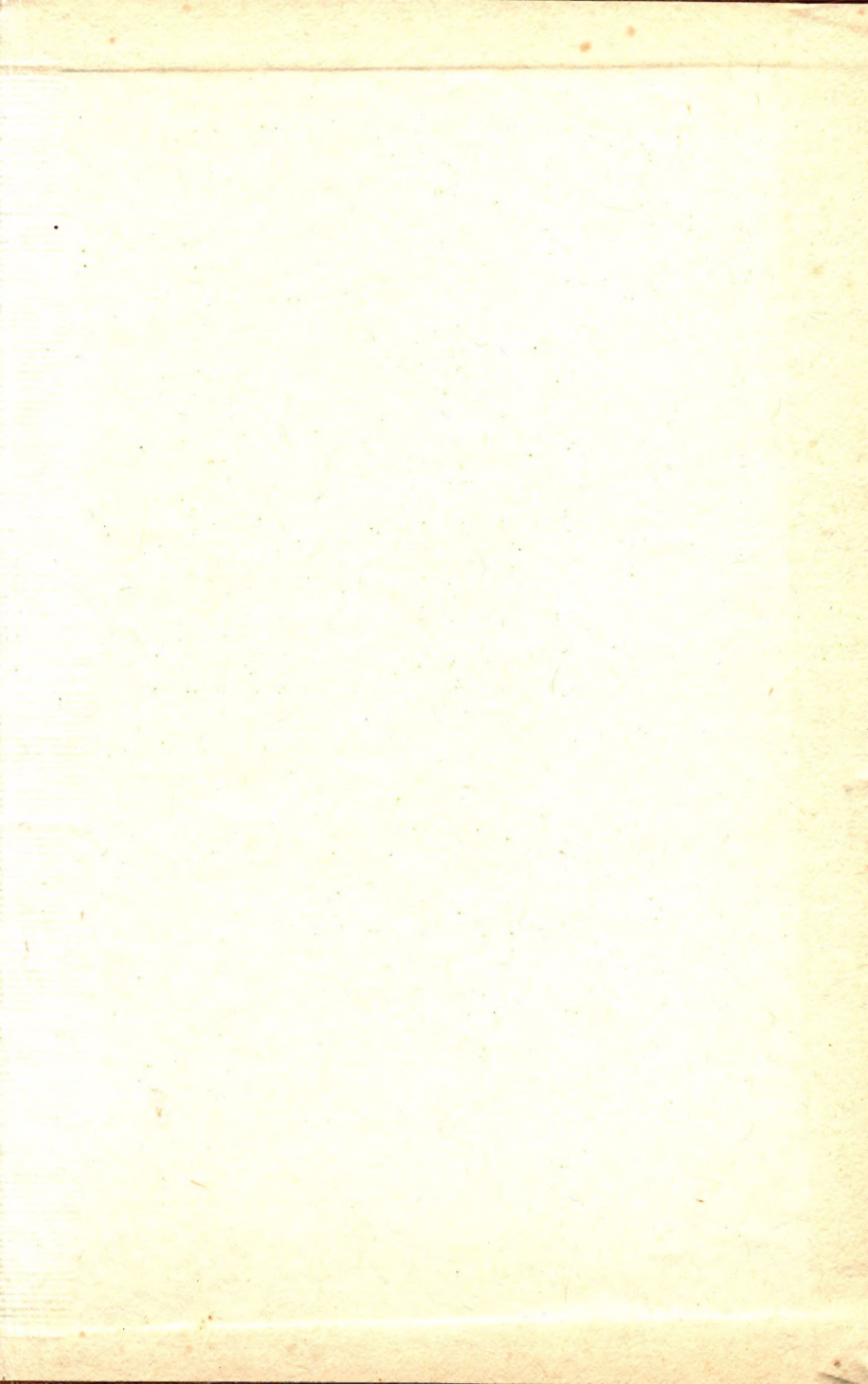
Редактор *Л. С. Алексеева*
Издательский редактор *Г. А. Лернер*
Художественный редактор *В. С. Камкина*
Технические редакторы *И. Ф. Марчукова* и *М. И. Натанов*

Подписано к печати 24/VI-1958 г.
Формат 84×108¹/₃₂. Бум. л. 2,25—7,38 печ. л. +1 вкл.
Учетно-изд. л. 4,89. Заказ № 328
Цена 4 руб. 50 к. Тираж 10000.

Отпечатано в 15-й типографии «Искра революции»
Управления полиграфической промышленности
Мосгорсовнархоза, Москва.







4p582



THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA